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Response to Implementation: An Analysis of Teachers' Perceptions of Efficacy Concerning the Implementation of Response to Intervention in Selected Schools

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Response to Implementation: An Analysis of Teachers' Perceptions of Efficacy Concerning the Implementation of Response to Intervention in Selected Schools

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family. My maternal grandparents, James Otis and Betty Laura Kincaid who shared with all of us unconditional love and a conviction to do the right things for the right reasons. My first year of teaching, they called me weekly to hear about the accomplishments of my first grade students at Leoline Horton Elementary in Weslaco, Texas. They believed that teaching was one of the highest callings in life. Their pride and belief in me encouraged me to do my very best for my students every single day. My parents, Vernon and Carolyn Fleming instilled in me a love of learning and sharing knowledge with others. Experiencing life with my children, Jalen and Gwyneth Hemphill, has developed my ability to respond to even everyday events with wonderment and awe. Finally, my husband, Darrin Hemphill, continues to be my greatest supporter and partner through every challenge and triumph in life. My entire family has been with me through each step of this journey. They are a part of this document and everything that I do.

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Abstract

Response to Implementation: An Analysis of Teachers' Perceptions of Efficacy Concerning the Implementation of Response to Intervention in Selected Schools

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The present multiple case study was conducted at two elementary schools serving kindergarten through fifth grade students in a Texas public school district. This study described the campus level systems to support teachers in their implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI). The purpose of this study was to determine teachers' perceived self-efficacy in implementing each component of the RtI model and to explore the possible effects it may have on student outcomes. The district installed several structures to ensure the successful implementation of the RtI model: daily dedicated intervention time, elementary intervention meetings, district-wide personnel to support the campus implementation of the RtI model, and clear guidance regarding data collection and use.

The teachers who participated in the study indicated that the structures contributed to their perceived self-efficacy about the RtI process and their ability to implement the model successfully. Teachers expressed very high perceived self-efficacy in improving student outcomes through the RtI model. They were knowledgeable about the components of the RtI model and how they should be used to benefit struggling students. Evaluation of teacher interviews revealed that all teachers relied on data to implement the model and determine student needs. One-third of the teachers expressed doubts in the accuracy of the assessments in identifying student needs, yet they did not abandon the process. They credited their participation in data meetings with their fidelity to the RtI model. Teachers identified multiple supports specific to the district that positively affected their perceived self-efficacy. The researcher did not determine how teacher self-efficacy affected student outcomes due to limited findings. The researcher recommended further qualitative research to explore how collective efficacy affects the academic outcomes of students receiving intervention.

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Chapter One: Introduction

In 2009, John Hattie published *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*, providing teachers and teacher leaders with evidence to support the use or abandonment of specific practices intended to increase student achievement. The book synthesized the results of studies by using the effect size or Cohen's d to express the magnitude of a study's outcomes for given variables. Hattie states that an effect size of 0.40 "sets a level where the effects of the innovation enhance achievement in such a way that we can notice real world differences" (2009, p. 17). He further claims that one year's input with these innovations will equate to one year of student growth (DeWitt, 2017). In 2009, student-level factors of self-reported grades and participation in programs based on students' developmental stages had the highest effect sizes (Hattie, 2009). By 2017, Hattie and his team had incorporated more studies, which changed the ranking of practices. Collective efficacy and response to intervention rank among the top five practices in effect size. The stated effect size for collective efficacy is 1.57 (DeWitt, 2017) and 1.29 for response to intervention (DeWitt, 2017). With these impressive effect sizes, simply implementing these practices should drastically increase students' academic outcomes. Unfortunately, changing student outcomes is not that easy.

Collective efficacy is not a practice that educators can decide to implement. Collective efficacy is a group's joint belief that working together in organized ways they can attain a certain result. Collective efficacy is the result of individual teachers believing in the notion that their actions make a difference in whether students learn (Bandura,

2006; Sehgal, Nambudiri, & Mishra, 2017). It is also a function of leadership (Sehgal, Nambudiri, & Mishra, 2017; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Leaders promote collective efficacy by organizing their staff, ensuring teachers have an opportunity to collaborate, and positively sanctioning their educational decisions for students (Sehgal, Nambudiri, & Mishra, 2017; Versland & Erickson, 2017).

Central to collective efficacy is each teacher's own level of perceived self-efficacy. Does the teacher believe that their actions yield positive results for students? Perceived self-efficacy is dependent upon the individual teacher's context within the organization. Albert Bandura posits that there are four sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences such as being coached or observing, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal (Bandura, 1982; Bandura, 2006). Experience teaching, gender, class size, and subject taught all have bearing on the teacher's perceived self-efficacy; teacher collaboration and principal leadership are especially critical (Sehgal, Nambudiri & Kumar Mishra, 2017). When teachers are faced with struggling students, a high level of perceived self-efficacy is crucial to an effective response.

An effective response to struggling students is the basis of the Response to intervention model. Response to intervention (RtI), seeks to provide students with direct, focused instruction that addresses all academic and behavioral problems with scientific-based interventions for a reasonable time—through a process of progress monitoring—before asking whether a student's difficulties might be linked to a disability (Batsche, et al., 2005; Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003). Implemented correctly, RtI serves as a whole school reform model that changes the job roles of school personnel, methods of

instruction, student assessment, and organizational structures within schools (Batsche et al., 2005; Kloo & Zigmond, 2009). The potential benefits provided by RtI can only be realized if the reform model is implemented well. Ensuring teachers develop their perceived self-efficacy and their effectiveness with the implementation of RtI could have positive effects on student outcomes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The success of the model depends on teachers perceived self-efficacy to implement response to intervention effectively. Self-efficacy depends on contexts (Bandura, 2006). The campus culture, materials available, student needs and leadership are all factors that could determine a teacher's perception of self-efficacy. The last study of perceived self-efficacy and RtI occurred before the practice was so widely used nearly a decade ago (Nunn & Jantz, 2009). Given the widespread implementation and passage of time. A study is needed to gauge perceptions among teachers who have always taught in schools implementing RtI or teachers who may have experienced greater self-efficacy with another model or set of instructional strategies.

Components of the RtI model such as universal screening, intervention and progress monitoring have been used in schools for decades. While they have not been researched extensively as they pertain to the RtI model, research on each discrete component has been performed (Dougherty Stahl, Keane, & Simic, 2013; Kozleski & Huber, 2010; O'Connor & Freeman, 2012). The literature revealed that researchers are applying evidence from other areas particularly implementation of other reforms such as

new curricula or instructional practices. The transportability of some of the components from the research setting to the classroom in the local education agency is a limitation on the implementation of the model (Kratochwill, Volpiansky, Clements, & Ball, 2007; Kozleski & Huber, 2010; O'Connor & Freeman, 2012). To overcome this limitation frequent, intense and durable staff development is needed in the areas of assessment, intervention activities and the use of systemic change skills. Such training should allow for frequent instances for the participants to learn actively. The professional development should also be aligned with the instructional content area of the teacher and their personal and district goals and objectives (Desimone, Porter, Birman, Garet, & Yoon, 2002).

Similarly, qualitative studies have been conducted to evaluate perceived self-efficacy focus on supporting struggling students or students receiving specialized services (Wang, 2017). Most studies of teacher self-efficacy are conducted using surveys with little or no face to face contact allowing the researcher to discuss the meaning behind each response, the hopes and fears of the teachers.

The RtI model requires districts to change their paradigms for professional development, assessment, and service to all students. In light of those changes research is needed to examine how to best support teachers in their development of self-efficacy in relation to the RtI model.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

District and campus administrators must work together to build the model that works best for their organization based on identified needs and resources. Teachers must

use the model to improve student outcomes. The purpose of this study was to describe the campus level systems to support teachers in their implementation of RtI. It was also the purpose of this study to determine teachers' perceived self-efficacy in implementing each component of the RtI model and to explore the possible effects it may have on student outcomes.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The implementation of the response to intervention model relies upon teachers who believe in their abilities to implement each component of the RtI model. Examining and documenting the systems in place to support the RtI model will be beneficial when gauging teachers' degree of perceived self-efficacy to implement the model and affect student achievement.

Research Question One: What campus-level systems have been installed to support the implementation of RtI?

Research Question Two: How do teachers perceive their efficacy concerning their knowledge and application of RtI?

Research Question Three: How do teacher perceptions of efficacy affect student outcomes within the RtI model?

OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

This study seeks to understand how teachers make meaning of the world around them through their beliefs in their abilities to implement components of the RtI model. A qualitative research design is appropriate due to the interpretive nature of the inquiry

(Creswell, 2009). In this study, the setting and its contextual data and the data collected directly from the participants are needed to create a holistic account of the case (Creswell, 2009). The participants in this study will be interviewed in their natural settings, and data collected about the everyday, ordinary practices related to the RtI model. The interview data will offer thick descriptions that capture each teacher's perception of their efficacy. District personnel will share data with the researcher to determine how or if teacher self-efficacy may affect student outcomes in this setting.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Collective teacher efficacy – The collective belief that teachers can organize and execute to ensure student success (Bandura, 2006; Hattie, 2009).

Widely used since the US Office of Education issued regulations to identify students with learning disabilities, the **discrepancy model** assesses the discrepancy between intellectual ability and academic achievement. A severe discrepancy between ability and achievement in one or more of seven academic areas that is unrelated to any exclusionary factors such as emotional disturbance or visual impairment will indicate the presence of a learning disability (Evans, 1990; US Office of Education, 1977).The process of identification involves the administration of a standardized test of cognitive intelligence (IQ), a standardized test of academic achievement, and a unique formula to calculate the discrepancy (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2005; O'Donnell & Miller, 2011).

ISIP™ is "**Istation's** Indicators of Progress, Early Reading (**ISIP** Early Reading) is a sophisticated, web-delivered Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT) system that provides

Continuous Progress Monitoring (CPM) by frequently assessing and reporting student ability in critical domains of reading throughout the academic years" (Mathes, Torgesen, & Herron, 2016, pp. 1-1).

MAP which stands for Measures of Academic Progress is an assessment product from the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA). The norm referenced, computer adaptive assessment can be administered to students "two to three times per school year. The results provide teachers with information to help them deliver appropriate content for each student and determine each student's academic growth over time" (Northwest Evaluation Association, n.d.). Data may be used to differentiate instruction, pinpoint individual needs, and set achievement goals. The NWEA website states that the assessment MAP-Growth may be used as a universal screener within the RtI model.

Perceived self-efficacy is a judgement of one's "capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001, p. 783).

Professional development can be classified learning activities that allow teachers to increase their knowledge and skills, change their attitudes and belief and increase student level out comes. This definition expands the idea of traditional workshop based professional development to include job embedded offerings such as professional coaching or review of current curricula or practices (Desimone, 2009).

Progress monitoring is "a scientifically based practice used to assess students' academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring can be

implemented with individual students or an entire class" (National Center on Student Progress Monitoring, 2009).

Response to intervention (RtI) is defined as the practice of providing high-quality instruction and intervention matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about change in instruction and goals, and applying the child's response data to important educational decisions (Batsche et al., 2005).

Specific learning disability (SLD) is defined in IDEA as "a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia" (IDEA, 2004, §602).

Learning problems that are the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage are not included in the category of SLD; therefore, they are not addressed by RtI.

Universal screening is assessment given to the entire population at predetermined intervals throughout the year. Results are used to identify students in need of additional help.

DELIMITATIONS

This study is concerned with the factors that support a successful implementation of the response to intervention model. It is not concerned with the specific academic or behavioral intervention applied to individual students. Participants in the study will be employed by the same school district in north Texas. All campus level participants will work on public elementary school campuses that serve students from PK to fifth grade.

LIMITATIONS

This multiple case study will be conducted at to two schools in one school district. The participants at each will be purposefully selected by the building administrator per the researcher's agreement with the district's research and evaluation department. Only one teacher per grade level will participate in the study.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Response to Intervention is not a step-by-step program but a general model for how to serve students who are experiencing academic or behavioral difficulties. It is considered a viable alternative to identify students who need special education services. IDEA clearly states that districts are not required to employ the discrepancy model, but it does not fully explain what the RtI model will look like or how it should be implemented by a school district or state. Absent clear guidance on implementation activities, each school district must develop its own implementation model, resulting in the various models that have been proposed throughout the country. Response to Intervention is a model being used or considered by a growing number of school districts. This study

explores how teachers' sense of efficacy in various areas affects the implementation of the RtI model and student outcomes. The results of this study will inform implementation considerations made by school districts, but it is important to note that this study is not concerned with the specific academic or behavioral interventions applied to individual students.

This study adds to the growing body of literature on the RtI model and perceived self-efficacy. More importantly, it will give district and campus leaders concrete supports they can install to promote perceived teacher self-efficacy. RtI contrasts the wait-to-fail mentality of the discrepancy model by providing students with the correct interventions in a timely manner. The findings from this study propose to provide leaders with the same level of support students receive: timely information to support them as they implement the RtI model. To that end, the participants from each site will review the results of this study to inform their practices.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present research study of teacher self-efficacy concerning their knowledge and application of the RtI model is directly related to the worldview of social constructivism. With its roots in the social sciences, social constructivism asserts that all learning is mediated by social interaction (Creswell, 2009). The tenets of the constructivist worldview are:

1. Learning is an active process.
2. Knowledge is constructed, rather than innate, or passively absorbed.
3. Knowledge is invented not discovered.

4. All knowledge is personal and idiosyncratic.
5. All knowledge is socially constructed.
6. Learning is essentially a process of making sense of the world.
7. Effective learning requires meaningful, open-ended, challenging problems for the learner to solve (Fox, 2001, p. 24)

These seven tenets match closely with the literature that describes the development of self-efficacy (Bandura, 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). While the process of reflecting and confirming self-efficacy beliefs may be passive and private, the learning experiences are active and social. Social constructivism also lends itself to qualitative research methods by encouraging meaningful, open ended problems (Creswell, 2009; Fox, 2001). The use of social constructivism offers the opportunity to examine interactions among teachers and campus leaders within the school setting. As individuals interact with each other, the views they form will differ. Their understanding of the RtI process may differ greatly. This will add to the depth of description and meaning in the case study (Creswell, 2009).

SUMMARY

This chapter introduced the study and statement of the problem. The researcher presented an overview of perceived self-efficacy and its relation to the RtI model. Terms related to the study were defined. The research questions in this chapter have led to the review of literature in Chapter 2 which gives further insight into the importance of perceived self-efficacy and the implementation of the RtI model.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter contains a review of the literature related to the concepts of perceived teacher self-efficacy and the Response to Intervention (RtI) model. The review focuses perceived self-efficacy. The implementation of RtI at the state and local level are examined with a focus on the role of the school district and campus leadership. Professional development and data use are discussed because of their importance to the RtI model and the development of self-efficacy.

PERCEIVED SELF-EFFICACY

Teachers' perceived self-efficacy has been linked to their efforts to persist in the face of difficulties (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Mojavezi & Tamil, 2012), openness to new methods in teaching; professional behavior (Guskey, 1988); resilience; investment in teaching; goal setting (Bandura, 1982); and using positive, authentic strategies to support students who experience difficulties (Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990). Self-efficacy has been defined as the belief in one's abilities to produce certain results (Bandura, 2006). Perceived self-efficacy should not be confused with the constructs of self-esteem or locus of control. Perceived self-efficacy judges one's capability; self-esteem judges one's self-worth (Bandura, 2006). Locus of control is concerned with outcomes and whether they are controlled by the individual or by outside forces. Perceived self-efficacy influences human self-development, adaptation, and change (Bandura, 2006).

Bandura (2006) theorized four sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal. He described mastery experiences as successful experiences that serve as proof that an individual can

attain a certain result. Authentic mastery experiences heighten perceived self-efficacy. Mastery produces the strongest sense of self-efficacy. Judgments about one's capabilities enhance one's skill capabilities and performance mastery (Bandura, 2006).

Vicarious experiences have also been marked by success in attaining a result, though not when the individual was the person performing the action successfully. Vicarious experiences, as the name implies, are successes experienced through another person. Seeing others do something successfully through modeling has a profound result on people's self-efficacy (Bandura, 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Vicarious experiences such as observing a master teacher or a peer modeling a lesson or technique can raise self-efficacy. The impact of vicarious experiences is mitigated by the degree to which the teacher identifies with the model. A teacher's positive or negative feelings while teaching may also affect the level of perceived self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

In one study, agoraphobic individuals were coached through the process of coping in community settings (Bandura, 2006). Therapists accompanied their clients in these settings and provided aids to ensure their clients could cope effectively. As study participants showed progress, therapists gradually decreased their presence while increasing challenges for participants to perform on their own. Action based on self-efficacy relies on the individual's skills and assurances in their coping efficacy. Interest and motivation grow from meeting internal standards, perceived self-efficacy, and performance accomplishments, not from extrinsic rewards. Attainment of proximal goals, sub-goals, marks progress along the way to larger goals and verify a sense of self-

efficacy. Proximal goals are more immediate goals that are readily attainable and provide immediate incentives and positive feedback. Self-motivation, an internal comparison process, spurs individuals to create personal standards against which they evaluate their own performance (Bandura, 1982, 2006)

Bandura cites sources of discordance with perceived self-efficacy as faulty self-knowledge, misjudgment of task requirements, constraints on action, disincentives to act, and new experiences (2006). He posits that proxy control, when an individual gives up personal control to another, reduces the individual's opportunities to build skills for efficacious action (Bandura, 2006).

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's 2007 study viewed verbal persuasion as the interpersonal support received from parents, teachers, community members, and administrators. They include both positive and negative verbal interactions within the teaching context. Verbal persuasion is effective if the person believes they can produce the effects. The persuasion influences the person to exert more effort to succeed and develop the necessary skills (Bandura, 2006). They found that a positive school climate yields stronger perceived self-efficacy among teachers. Organizational features such as an orderly culture and high academic expectations are positively related to self-efficacy. Leadership expressed by the principal in the form of encouragement of innovations and responsiveness to concerns bolsters the collective efficacy beliefs of teachers. Self-efficacy beliefs are thought to be in flux but solidify as teachers gain valuable mastery experiences (Bandura 1982, 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Novice teachers differed from career teachers in their reliance on verbal persuasion as a source for self-

efficacy. Novice teachers also noted the importance of contextual factors such as the availability of materials as strongly related to their ability to teach. The support of colleagues and others was of greater import to novice teachers (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

Perceived teacher self-efficacy and students in need of intervention

In a study to investigate Swedish teachers' perceived self-efficacy and subject and pedagogical knowledge, researchers studied these factors in relation to teaching math to low-performing middle school students (Ekstam, Korhonen, Linnanmäki, & Aunio, 2018). Researchers found the performance of low-performing students was affected by teacher quality and teacher efficacy beliefs (Ekstam, Korhonen, Linnanmäki, & Aunio, 2018). Both special education teachers and math teachers were included in the study. The research team constructed their own self-efficacy scale to fit the context of the study, which was administered to 55 teachers of students in grades 7–9. They found that special education teachers had a higher sense of self-efficacy when compared to the math teachers. Neither gender, experience, nor certification status showed a significant difference in self-efficacy beliefs (Ekstam, Korhonen, Linnanmäki, & Aunio, 2018). A study of college students with disabilities and their instructors' self-efficacy on making accommodations to enhance the student's learning found that the greater the students' self-disclosure about their disabilities the higher the perceived self-efficacy of the instructor (Wright & Meyer, 2017). Empathy and flexibility were strong predictors of self-efficacy. The more instructors knew about the student, the more self-efficacy they

possessed to make the accommodation (Wright & Meyer, 2017). Similarly, Wang, Tan, Li, Tan, and Lim (2017) found that a teacher's knowledge about students, rapport, and previous experience were identified as crucial in determining self-efficacy. Wright and Meyer (2017) found that students may attribute a teacher's self-inefficacy in applying their accommodation to an unwillingness to help them.

Professional development and perceived self-efficacy

Professional development plays a role in improving self-efficacy. With professional development, teachers improved goal setting, self-monitoring and learning tactics (Wright & Meyer, 2017). In a 2017 study by Peters-Burton and Botov, professional development providers were able to analyze teacher learning and focus on the teachers' difficulties and successes as they learned new skills. This increased focus allowed providers to better meet the teachers' needs. Teachers new to the concept of inquiry-based learning experienced low self-efficacy in planning lessons. Yet, they persisted in learning about inquiry due to their high interest in the practice and its perceived value to the learner. The researchers identified a need to balance process and outcome goals to improve self-efficacy (Peters-Burton & Botov, 2017). Researchers have also recommended specialized training on needs of low-performing students and stronger support to help leaders and peers to help teachers operating in difficult contexts (Wang, Tan, Li, Tan, & Lim, 2017).

Assessing self-efficacy

Efficacy scales must be multifaceted and linked to the domain (Bandura, 2006). The measure should consider the subject's knowledge of the domain and the level of control they are able to enact. Bandura (2006) uses the domain of weight loss to illustrate his point. The subject must have knowledge of what foods they should eat and the benefits of exercise, as well as the ability to control their eating habits and their level of physical activity. Perceived self-efficacy will be based on the subject's judgments of each facet of weight loss (Bandura, 2006). The scales should reflect the level of challenge individuals believe they can meet or surpass. The researcher should spend time understanding the challenges and demands subjects experience in the domain. Bandura (2006) suggests that a 0–100 response format is a stronger predictor of performance than a 5-interval scale. Subjects need to understand that the scale is meant to judge their current state, not their expected capabilities. Bandura recommends labeling the scales with a nondescript title and allowing subjects to complete the scale in private with the promise of anonymity to minimize response bias.

In their 2001 article, Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy propose a measure of teacher efficacy and provide supporting validity and reliability data from three separate studies. Measures of teacher efficacy have included two main factors: the teacher's feelings of competence and outcome expectancy. The authors argue that outcome expectancy is not directly related to the impact the teacher whose efficacy is being measured has on students. The team employed teacher input to construct their measure and ensure it captured typical tasks associated with a teacher's work life. Teachers and

teacher educators who participated in a review of previous measures found that some items were not representative of a teacher's daily work. The resulting measure included three factors: efficacy for instructional strategies, efficacy for classroom management, and efficacy in student engagement (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001)

The principal's role

Teacher collaboration and principal leadership are critical to teacher self-efficacy. (Sehgal, Nambudiri, & Mishra, 2017). Self-efficacy beliefs affect whether people think productively, pessimistically, or optimistically and in self-enacting or self-debilitating ways, as well as how well they motivate themselves and persevere in the face of difficulties (Versland & Erickson, 2017). The principal's ability to motivate and support teachers is a source of teacher self-efficacy (Bandura 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Self-efficacy of the principal effects the school's collective efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2007; Versland & Erickson, 2017).

In a study of self-efficacy and cultural responsiveness, researchers coded responses based on positive, negative, and neutral comments (Thomas-Alexander & Harper, 2017). The participants in this study held a deficit perspective of urban students and urban schools. They exhibited a lack of confidence in working with diverse students. The researchers suggested attributional retraining as a strategy to combat lack of self-efficacy. Using this strategy, teachers could focus on those attributes that can change (Thomas-Alexander & Harper, 2017). In another study linking teacher self-efficacy to multicultural attitudes, teachers' sense of self efficacy was positively related to their

multicultural attitudes score (Artiles, Kozleski, Trent, Osher, & Ortiz, 2010). Principal leadership is needed to ensure the recommended professional development reaches teachers who need additional support (Elmore, 1996).

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act allowed districts additional authority to use a child's response or lack of response to scientific, research-based interventions as part of the evaluation process in determining whether a child has a specific learning disability (IDEA, 2004). RtI is defined as "an approach to prevention and remedial instruction that generates data that not only inform instructional decisions but may help identify students with learning disabilities" (Barth, et al., 2008). Three components have been identified as necessary for any implementation of RtI. They are (1) research-based instructional methods that are monitored for integrity, (2) measurement of students' response to these methods, and (3) changing instruction based on these data (Batsche et al., 2005; Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003).

Evidence-based interventions are provided for students. As students exhibit a lack of response to the intervention provided, the intervention increases in intensity and frequency. Universal screening is the initial assessment administered to all students to determine the level of risk of future poor learning outcomes (American Institutes for Research, n.d.). Progress monitoring is administered more frequently to assess the student's rate of improvement once interventions have been implemented. RtI seeks to provide students with direct, focused instruction that addresses all academic and

behavioral problems with scientific-based interventions for a reasonable time, through a process of progress monitoring, before asking whether a student's difficulties might be linked to a disability (Batsche et al., 2005; Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003). The model is dependent upon educators' abilities to analyze data about students' responsiveness to interventions. Data-Based Decision Making is the core component of the RtI model (American Institutes for Research, n.d.).

Focus on the student's response to interventions was seen as a remedy to the discrepancy model, which used assessments to compute the discrepancy between the student's ability and achievement (Shinn, 2007). As early as 2005, teachers and administrators could evaluate their implementation of RtI using National Association of State Directors of Special Education Implementation Survey (Batchse et al., 2005). The survey was easily accessible and allowed participants to evaluate their satisfaction with the implementation process and their level of perceived progress toward implementation of all components of RtI. Student performance within the model was not evaluated. Large scale implementation projects such as the one funded by the Florida Department of Education in 2006 employed an evaluation model that assessed the impact of their PSM/RtI on student outcomes as well as district- and campus-level variables and the satisfaction of teachers and parents (Batchse, Curtis, Dorman, Castillo, & Porter, 2007).

Shapiro and Clemens (2009) employed an evaluation model that included the same factors as Batchse, Curtis, Dorman, Castillo, and Porter. (2007) but with a keener focus on student outcomes within the tiered model. Their conceptual model proposes a set of five indicators that allow schools and districts to measure impact within a relatively

short time of implementation. The five indicators are the percentage who scored within low, some, or at-risk levels across benchmark periods; the average rate of improvement (ROI) for students across two benchmark periods and how that rate compares to normative growth rates at their grade levels; the number of students who moved to a less- or more-intensive tier between benchmark periods; the rate of improvement for students in tier 2 or 3 compared to the rate of improvement for the rest of the group; and the percentage of students referred to special education (Shapiro & Clemens, 2009). This model's focus on student-level outcomes at multiple levels allows implementers to accurately determine where the breakdowns in the system occur.

Response to Intervention Implementation

Although the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) has emphasized that RtI exists as one of several components available for identifying students with a specific learning disability (SLD) and does not replace the requirement to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the student (Zirkel, n.d.), RtI has emerged as an offspring of IDEA. As a result, school districts have modified the requirements governing special education programs to include a student's response to intervention as the *primary* mode of identification for children with SLDs. The intent of the intervention approach is to ensure that initial attempts to meet students' needs through a tiered approach of instructional interventions occur in the general education classroom, making it unnecessary to classify them as learning disabled or to wait for the student to fail before he/she is referred to special education.

IDEA may appear to have prescribed certain actions and programs for educators to take or use, its language of is “permissive, not mandatory” (Zirkel, n.d., para. 5). Furthermore, policy guidance on how to implement programs in a research or evidence-based manner has been relegated to the states (Zirkel & Thomas, 2010). The federal government cannot legislate how effectively the local education agency (LEA) implements a law, as such oversight infringes on the rights of states and school districts; however, without such guidance, both states and school districts must formulate their own implementation plans—plans that may or may not yield the intended results. It is important, then, to consider what makes an implementation plan effective, both generally and for its specific district.

In 2005, the National Implementation Research Network identified seven stages of implementation (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace): exploration, installation, initial implementation, full operation, innovation, and sustainability. To reach the level of full implementation may take as long as 2-4 years. The exploration stage allows participants in the process to make decisions about the program and discuss common beliefs and misconceptions. Program installation follows exploration, as participants gather support from other members of the organization and begin to build the infrastructure necessary to put the program in place. The initial implementation is an awkward stage when members of the organization begin to adopt the program. Their roles are changing, and they sometimes feel uncertain of or anxious about the program. Full operation is achieved when the new program is integrated into the organization’s practices, policies, and procedures. As the organization works toward full

implementation, the question of how the program or reform will be sustained over time should be considered (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005). The model has since been refined to include just five stages, illustrated in Figure 1: exploration or purpose building, installation of infrastructure, initial implementation, and full implementation (Bertram, Blase, & Fixsen, 2013; Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005).

The model cannot be implemented without a knowledgeable, confident and competent teacher. Sobel and Steel (2009) identified five key concepts for professional development to support the Response to Intervention model: high level of professionalism, accurate and meaningful use of student data, intensifying academic and behavioral interventions, effective use of resources, and strategic planning. Teachers and administrators must reach mastery in each area to implement RtI successfully.

State-Level Implementation of RtI

Most states have taken the IDEA regulations and crafted them into operational definitions they use to develop policy and instruct school districts (Zirkel & Krohn, 2008). According to Shinn (2007), regardless of the definition of the model adopted by the state, the main purpose implied by the legislation is that response to intervention offers a potential remedy to the perceived problems with determining special education eligibility under the category of specific learning disabilities (SLD). The former method, often referred to as the *discrepancy model* was based on computing the discrepancy between the student's ability and achievement. This method has been used widely since

the 1970s and has developed several opponents along the way (Shinn, 2007). A survey of state laws in October of 2007 found that 13% of states required RtI and prohibited the discrepancy model. Four percent of states were in a transition phase allowing both the discrepancy model and RtI to be used until the district fully implemented the RtI model. The largest group of states (36%) operated under what the authors referred to as a "permissive" option that permitted the use of both RtI and the discrepancy model within the state (Zirkel & Krohn, 2008).

States also provide varying levels of guidance to local education agencies on how to implement the RtI model. Fifteen states have clearly delineated RtI models that all districts within the state must follow. Of the 15 states with their own RtI models, 13 employ some form of problem solving. The problem-solving model varies by state as well. Although every state does not have a state-developed model, 88% of the states have or plan to have some form of professional development to offer to local education agencies (Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009). Each state is developing its own model for identification of students with specific learning disabilities. This has caused considerable difficulties for local education agencies and researchers who want to investigate the model or even its components (Al Otaiba, Connor, Foorman, Greulich, & Folsom, 2009). In their work, Al Otaiba and her colleagues (Al Otaiba, Connor, Foorman, Greulich, & Folsom, 2009) recommend that one way to mitigate the uncertainty of implementation models is to create a model that provides students with a wide safety net capable of catching them before they fail.

Published in 2015, the *Evaluation of Response to Intervention Practices for Elementary School Reading* report commissioned by the Institute of Education Sciences' National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance reported the services and impacts of RtI for the 2011–12 school year. Researchers studied 146 schools across 13 states to determine whether assignment to receive intervention had any effect on reading performance. The schools included in the study reported full implementation of the RtI model for grades 1–3. All participating impact schools were screened to determine their experience with RtI implementation. Impact schools were also more likely to allocate additional staff to assist teachers in their use of data and to provide reading interventions. The study does not provide evidence to inform schools on the adoption of the RtI model to increase student achievement. The study provides descriptive information regarding the adoption of RtI in multiple states. It captures the real-world nature of adoption occurring outside of a controlled experimental setting. The study focuses narrowly on students just above and just below a predetermined cut score using an impact estimation strategy rather than including the full range of students (Balu et al., 2015).

The results of the 2015 study showed that grade 1 students designated for more intensive intervention performed worse than those who were not designated. The study attracted criticism from other researchers (Arden, Gandhi, Edmonds, & Danielson, 2017; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2017). The study could be seen as an evaluation of the universal screening practices across 146 schools. Fuchs and Fuchs (2017) cite the common false positives and resulting misplacement of students as a critical problem with many

universal screeners. These false positives cause schools to waste precious resources. The authors believe tiered intervention provided by many school districts may not meet student needs due to poor design or poor implementation. Fuchs and Fuchs suggest that a simpler RtI model embedded in the general education classroom may be more effective at meeting the needs of struggling students while not taxing school resources. Additionally, Arden, Gandhi, Edmonds, and Danielson (2017) make four recommendations to improve the implementation of tiered instruction: "(a) assessing readiness and capacity, (b) providing content and coaching as part of professional development, (c) using evaluation data, and (d) including students with disabilities" (p. 269). Coaching supports the implementation of the model and the perceived self-efficacy of teachers who implement the model in their classrooms daily. Balu et al. (2015) study found that the majority of teachers provided core classroom instruction and Tier 2 intervention.

Classroom teachers are responsible for Tier 1 instruction. The core curriculum for academics and behavior are provided to all students. If students begin to struggle on Tier 1, they may receive targeted re-teaching or another low-intensity intervention (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010). Students who do not respond to the core curriculum may move on to Tier 2 of the RtI model where they receive more targeted, strategic intervention (Burns, 2002; Dorn, 2010; Ysseldyke, Burns, Scholin, & Parker, 2010). Their intervention will increase in duration and intensity at this tier (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010). Student progress is monitored more frequently at Tier 2 with curriculum-based measures, a form of formative assessment that focuses on the student's level of performance related to the local curriculum (Burns, 2002; Dorn, 2010;

Ysseldyke, Burns, Scholin, & Parker, 2010). Students who continue to struggle at Tier 3 may benefit from more intense intervention at Tier 3. Al Otaiba and her colleagues (2009) propose a hybrid that combines Tiers 1 and 2. In their survey of the literature, they found that most models had at least 3 tiers of intervention. Several state models included a fourth tier was for students who were determined to be eligible for special education.

Researchers from Stephen F. Austin University surveyed 15 public school districts and each of the 20 Educational Service Centers in the state of Texas to evaluate seven constructs of their RtI implementation. The constructs were written guidelines, RtI training, RtI analysis skills, time for tasks related to RtI, effectiveness of practices, adequacy of resources, and availability of assistance and confidence to complete RtI tasks. They found that progress is being made to implement models throughout the state. They suggested clear communication of the model to the teams of school personnel charged with implementing the model (Mask, Solmonson, & Welsh, 2011). Most research in school district leadership and implementation of RtI examines implementation at the campus level and bypasses the role school district leadership plays in influencing campus-level decisions regarding RtI.

Campus-Level Implementation of RtI

Individual campuses must implement the policies supporting RtI to the best of their ability regardless of the quality of guidance they receive. Kloo and Zigmond (2009) suggest that campuses proceed in their implementation very slowly. First campuses should perform a "reality check" to assess their readiness for implementation. Their study

focused on an elementary school in western Pennsylvania. As they followed the school's implementation efforts and sought to support campus educators, they observed that the school lacked the infrastructure to support the RtI model. Capacity, resources, and school culture are identified as the main areas that should be considered before implementing the RtI model. The study highlights the problems schools and districts will encounter if they do not conduct a needs assessment prior to implementation. A successful implementation of RtI is dependent upon the readiness and the achievement level of the campus.

Formative Assessment and Data-Based Decision Making: Critical RtI Processes

The predominance of high-stakes testing in district-level decision making forces formative assessments into the background (Dorn, 2010). Time constraints may act as a barrier to the implementation of many reforms. Formative assessments must compete for attention from teachers and administrators as they respond to other mandates and priorities. Qualitative data gathered from classroom teachers suggest that teachers welcome tests that provide them with relevant information (Valli & Buese, 2007; Wayman, Cho, & Shaw, 2009).

Formative assessments must be used to measure student progress toward those goals, but just what is formative assessment? Black and Wiliam (1998) define it as

> activities undertaken by teachers—and their students in assessing themselves—that provide information to be used as feedback to modify teaching and learning activities. Such assessment becomes formative assessment when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching to meet student needs. (p. 2)

This definition repeats the key elements of the definition of response to intervention. Both emphasize the use of data to inform instructional decisions. Neither the type of assessment nor the timing of the administration is as important as how the teacher alters their practices to meet the needs of the learner. A formative assessment is characterized by the application of its results, which provides direct or indirect feedback to the learner (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Chappuis & Chappuis, 2007; Popham, 2009). Student responsiveness within the RtI model is measured by progress monitoring assessments (Batsche et al., 2005). These assessments in addition to the universal screener must be given at regular intervals to measure the student's rate of improvement (Batsche et al., 2005). A struggling student who has reached the highest tier of intervention will take weekly assessments to monitor growth. The professionals charged with monitoring the student's growth must work together to address the student's needs (Barth, 2008; Batsche et al, 2005; Burns, 2002; Doherty, Stahl, Keane, & Simic, 2013; Marsh, 2012; Shapiro & Clemens, 2009). Without the use of formative assessments, they cannot evaluate those needs or determine if the student has responded to the interventions provided.

The use of formative assessment is central to the RtI model. Black and Wiliam open their argument for formative assessment with the idea that it is a self-evident proposition: teachers need a strong, viable curriculum coupled with a system for gauging student growth and mastery of the curriculum. Instructional delivery should be tied more closely to assessment results than instructional calendars (Shepard, 2009). The meta-analysis completed by Black and Wiliam concluded that all innovations involving the strengthening of formative assessments produced significant learning gains. The effect

sizes ranged from 0.4 to 0.7 in these studies. Despite the gains that can be realized through formative assessment, the realities of "external," high-stakes assessments prevail (Dorn, 2010). Teachers and curriculum developers alike must respond to the demands of high-stakes testing. Regardless of these demands, teachers still create their own assessments or find other resources to assess interim student learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

Formative assessments are situated within an assessment triad that functions as a continuum (Perie, Marion, & Gong, 2009). At one end of the continuum is formative assessment with its very narrow scope and short cycle. At the far end of the continuum is summative assessment, which has a very wide scope and a longer assessment cycle. Interim assessments fall between summative and formative assessments. The frequency with which the assessment may be given lessens with the progression from formative to summative assessment. Districts use each of these assessments for distinct reasons. Summative assessments are used for accountability and group comparisons (Valencia, 2011). One use of interim assessments is to predict a student's performance on high-stakes summative assessments (Perie, Marion, & Gong, 2009; Shepard, 2009; Valencia, 2011). The district is not the most direct beneficiary of formative assessment use. The student benefits from formative assessments when the teacher alters their instruction to meet the student's needs (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

Teacher data use drives the response to intervention process. A teacher's belief in the merits of formative instruction may determine student outcomes. Coburn and Talbert (2006) found that individuals have differing beliefs about the valid use of the evidence

yielded from a variety of sources and their appropriate use. The difference in their conceptions was dependent on their place in the organization. Teachers saw evidence that was authentic and based on teacher judgment as valid. Principals found multiple measures taken over time to be a valid criterion for evidence use. District-level administrators charged with supporting campuses valued evidence based on teacher judgment but preferred data rooted in alignment with valued academic outcomes or data that gives insight into student thinking and reasoning (Coburn & Talbert, 2006). Wayman and Stringfield supported the "triangulation" of multiple data sources in order to understand the student. One piece of data will not give us an accurate picture of the student's knowledge or ability. The use of varied data sources allows us to see the whole student. In the development of a testing program, Black and Wiliam (1998) suggest that practitioners study how formative and external tests interact and find more use in the external, high-stakes testing.

District-Level Data Use and Support

At the district level, assessments should be evaluated for their contribution to overall student achievement. Perie, Marion, and Gong (2009) suggest that school districts address five essential questions before implementing an assessment:

(1) What do I want to learn from this assessment?

(2) Who will use the information gathered from this assessment?

(3) What action steps will be taken as a result of this assessment?

(4) What professional development or support structures should be in place to ensure the action steps are taken appropriately?

(5) How will student learning improve because of using this interim assessment system and will it improve more than if the assessment system were not used? (p. 9)

If any of these questions is left unanswered, the assessment will not serve the intended purpose.

The district is also responsible for setting expectations for assessments and the levels of achievement within the RtI system and the school system as a whole. The act of setting expectations for the district's assessment system affords the district an opportunity to set the values for assessment that are communicated throughout the organization (Stiggins, 2009; Honig, 2008). Wayman, Brewer, and Stringfield (2009) refer to this act as valuation. The district's valuation of data begins with the belief that data is integral to the functioning of the district. Senior administrators at the district level talk about data when they address staff members, tax payers, and school trustees. This keeps data in the forefront and shows the importance it holds within the district. Test scores are not the only metrics that should be discussed in public forums. All evidence of student growth should be addressed as well. This gives the public as well as teachers within the system the understanding that all forms of data are necessary to form a clear picture of student growth.

The valuation of data leads very naturally to providing access to the data (Lachat & Smith, 2005; Wayman, Brewer, & Stringfield, 2009). Teachers need access to useful

data that informs their instruction in a timely manner. The type of data a district values will determine its use within the district. As previously discussed, due to the pressures of high-stakes testing and its link to funding and rating systems, formal, summative tests are highly valued at the district level (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Dorn, 2010). Valuing high-stakes tests does not exclude formative assessments. District leaders can show their commitment to formative assessment by addressing it publicly.

The public valuation of data reflects a deeper understanding of data use that must be present at the district level. One of the underlying tasks of the central office is to help campus administrators and teachers make sense of all the data they collect. Valuation speaks to what is important, but sensemaking reaches deeper to explore why a particular piece of data is important (Honig, 2008; Honig & Venkateswaran, 2012; Wohlstetter, Datnow, & Park, 2008). Sensemaking at the district level is an attempt to generalize, organizing the data and institutionalizing particular meanings and rules (Weick, 2009). District leaders do this by noticing and bracketing certain data and by labeling data for the teachers (Spillane & Miele, 2007; Weick, 2009). The ability to decide what data is important gives central office staff a great deal of power within the organization (Coburn & Turner, 2011; Weick, 2009). Members of central office determine the level of engagement among teachers from different schools in the district. Isolated within their own schools, teachers have limited access to social and professional resources (Cobb, McClain, de Silva Lamberg, & Dean, 2003). District-wide professional development and vertical or horizontal teaming with a focus on formative assessment allow teachers to

dialogue with a diverse group of teachers who may challenge their assumptions and practices (Honig, 2008; Honig & Venkateswaran, 2012).

Interaction and relationships among schools should be encouraged at the district level, but district leaders should also attend to their relationship with each campus. District administrators and support staff have the opportunity to build relationships with each campus by providing support. If district leaders are responsible for organizational learning, they should be able to model what that learning looks like. The act of modeling data use practices for teachers and campus administrators creates a relationship between the campus and central office that is based on joint work (Honig, 2008). Teachers see that the district is both willing to participate and supportive of their work.

In addition to central office staff who can model lessons or best practices, the central office can develop handbooks, protocols, and forms to guide teachers and administrators (Honig, 2008). They must teach campus administrators and teachers how to use assessments effectively.

The Principal's Role

Black and Wiliam acknowledge that most teachers already administer formative assessments as part of the interactive teaching and learning process (1998). This process is already in use in many classrooms, but it has not been tied to the RtI structure. The campus principal is integral to establishing routines for data use within the school. Teacher collaboration, time, and structure are needed to use formative assessment data effectively (Copland, 2003; Wayman, Brewer, & Stringfield, 2009). The building

principal has the authority of position to affect each of these factors, but the principal cannot act alone.

The principal can act as a gatekeeper to reforms and interventions initiated at the district level. This relationship with district-level staff can leverage the implementation of RtI at the campus level. Burch and Spillane (2004) speak to a 'middle system' that must be developed for district-level interventions to be successful at the campus level. This middle system is important to bringing the district's message to the campus through a cadre of central office administrators who are competent and confident in the district's data use strategies and plans. The principal has a host of competing demands for their time and attention coming from community, students, and parents. Elmore (1996) acknowledges that leaders may act as buffers to outside demands on the technical core, teacher, and students. To implement data use strategies at the campus level, principals need to embrace strategies by creating routines for data use on their campuses. Organizational routines such as grade-level meetings and special committees help to build lasting structures to support the desired data use practices (Spillane, Parise, & Sherer, 2011; Spillane & Miele, 2007). Routines align the school's structures with policy demands (Spillane, Parise, & Sherer, 2011; Valli & Buese, 2007).

The principal has influence over the routines and resources that are present in the school. The teacher has the ultimate power to enact those routines and resources within the classroom setting to benefit students. Teachers are accustomed to assessing students and collecting data (Young & Kim, 2010). Systematic data use to affect instruction is a less familiar routine for most teachers (Coburn, 2004; Heritage, Kim, Vendlinski, &

Herman, 2009; Marsh, 2012; Shepard, 2009; Young & Kim, 2010). Teachers' use of assessment data is directly related to their knowledge of their particular subject matter (Heritage, Kim, Vendlinski, & Herman, 2009; Young & Kim, 2010). RtI requires teacher expertise in early reading and math instruction and knowledge of positive behavior supports. Teachers should have a deep understanding of fundamental literacy and numeracy skills to instruct their students. Conversely, they must be able to select assessment to gauge student attainment of those skills. If students perform poorly on an assessment, the teacher should be able to adjust instruction to meet the students' needs. The use of formative assessments and the implementation of RtI are not possible if teachers do not know how to interpret students' results and provide appropriate feedback to students.

Teachers require professional development to build their capacity in the analysis and interpretation of student data. More importantly, they need to understand how to use their data analysis to adjust instruction (Coburn, 2004; Heritage, Kim, Vendlinski, & Herman, 2009; Kratochwill, Volpiansky, Clements, & Ball, 2007; Marsh, 2012; Shepard, 2009; Young & Kim, 2010). The allocation of financial and human resources and supports demonstrates this approval to campus level personnel (Desimone, Porter, Birman, Garet, & Yoon, 2002). Allocation of funding for professional development demonstrates the district leader's commitment to ensuring implementation. Professional development is central to a successful implementation of the RtI and formative assessment. Professional development efforts should be frequent and sufficient in intensity to build teacher skills. While no universal standard for professional development

exists, Desimone (2009) posits that professional development must result in increased teacher learning and change practice. Desimone (2009) suggests that professional development should focus on the desired outcome, not the structure of the activity. Desimone proposes five core features of professional development: content focus, active learning, coherence to the school or district's internal principles, duration, and collective participation. The author further proposes standards for the evaluation of teacher learning as a result of professional development through self-reporting, observations, or interviews.

The literature also speaks to the durability of the training for RtI. Durable training provides opportunities for participants to engage in guided practice and for staff to have opportunities to give and receive feedback on their attempts to implement (Kovaleski, 2007; Marsh, 2012). Such training should allow for frequent instances for the participants to learn actively. The professional development should also be aligned to the instructional content area of the teacher and to their personal and district goals and objectives. Professional development should be embedded into the regular elements of schooling because it shares the overall goal of all education, which is to improve student achievement and learning (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). Once implementation is underway, it is important that teachers are effective in their implementation, as measured by student performance on formative assessments. "Within the application of principles of RtI, teachers' beliefs about their capabilities and ultimate influence upon positive learning outcomes is logically related to the precepts of training using the RtI model" (Nunn & Jantz, 2009, p. 605). Ruppar, Gaffney, and

Dymond's 2015 qualitative study of decision making among special education teachers found that teachers felt more efficacious due to their knowledge of their students. The teachers in their study were more likely to turn to experts when their efficacy beliefs were challenged. Vicarious experiences are a source of self-efficacy (Bandura, 2006). However, in this study, researchers found that teachers did not readily incorporate the experiences into their own practices. Instead, they continued to defer to the knowledge of the expert. The researchers suggested additional professional development opportunities to promote the incorporation of new knowledge into everyday practices (Ruppar, Gaffney, & Dymond, 2015).

The characteristics of professional development needed to implement RtI and formative assessments are clear, but the content will vary based on the needs of the teachers involved. Teachers need assistance in selecting the appropriate response to the data yielded by formative assessments (Coburn, 2004; Heritage, Kim, Vendlinski, & Herman, 2009; Kratochwill, Volpiansky, Clements, & Ball, 2007; Marsh, 2012; Shepard, 2009; Young & Kim, 2010). District-level professional development held in a large impersonal setting will not meet the needs of teachers who are experiencing difficulties during the instructional day. District support staff must have regular contact with campus-based staff to ensure they receive help when needed (Honig & Venkateswaran, 2012; Young & Kim, 2010).

Professional development is important to the implementation of interventions for struggling students (Brock & Carter, 2017). Researchers in southern Florida led a three-year-long professional development opportunity for school-based leadership teams

responsible for implementing the RtI model. The researchers provided job-embedded coaching and 13 full-day face-to-face professional development sessions. The professional development opportunities yielded greater perceived skill in academics and data display skills for participants. Perceptions of RtI skills also increased due to the job embedded coaching (Castillo et al., 2016).

Glover's (2017) Data-Driven Instructional Coaching Model is related specifically to the RtI model. The model incorporates three primary components of coaching: "(a) an emphasis on the learning environment; (b) enrollment of teachers via modeling, designated opportunities for practice, and feedback; and (c) the use of a formalized data-driven implementation framework" (p.14). The five-phase framework is a cyclical process through which the coach guides the teacher. The model has been credited with improving teacher and interventionist knowledge and self-efficacy. The students in classrooms led by teachers who received coaching outperformed students in control classrooms. Students also scored higher on end-of-year measures of letter-sound identification and word attack. Coaching provides a vicarious experience leading to increased perceived self-efficacy for teachers. Increased student outcomes are an additional positive result. Four studies show that performance feedback and modeling are significant in the implementation of intervention for Special Education and struggling students (Brock & Carter, 2017). Professional development should be measured in terms of change in teacher behaviors. However, it is more important to ensure that practices improve or change over time (Brock & Carter, 2017). This can be accomplished by

modeling for the teacher and coaching to shape their implementation of the intervention (Brock & Carter, 2017).

Relational Trust

The need for strong relationships at each level of the organization to support teachers in strengthening their perceived self-efficacy and to implement RtI and formative assessments has emerged as a major theme. Trust undergirds all relationships within the organization. Teachers must trust each other, their principals, and district level support staff. Principals must trust their supervisors and teachers. The superintendent must trust everyone in the school district to be competent enough to do their jobs. Implementation of reforms such as RtI or new data systems within the school district is facilitated by a high trust environment (Marsh, 2012; Park & Datnow, 2009). As a district level administrator or superintendent, how does one create a high trust environment?

Relational trust is a building block upon which all social exchanges in the educational system rest. Relational trust requires that our expectations are validated by the actions of other members of our organization (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Their behaviors must be consistent with our personal feelings and beliefs about their intent. For relational trust to exist in the district, district level staff must meet campus staff's expectations by behaving in a manner consistent with their leadership role. Teachers must meet each other's expectations. The principal must meet the expectation of the students, teachers, community and district leadership. Observations are based on four characteristics: respect, competence, personal regard for others and integrity (Bryk &

Schneider, 2002). If these behavioral expectations are not met, relational trust cannot be established. All stakeholders in the education system have expectations of their schools and the superintendents who lead them

IMPLICATIONS

Building capacity within the system to implement reforms is a reasonable expectation. LEA administrators can meet that expectation through policy decisions and maintenance of balance within the school's systems. The definition of self-efficacy implies that teachers must trust and believe in their own abilities to teach students (Bandura, 2006). Students who move to more intense tiers of intervention within the RtI framework need teachers who are well trained (Glover, 2017; Mellard, 2010) and have a strong sense of self-efficacy (Brock & Carter, 2017; Wang, Li, 2017).

Of the three articles found addressing RtI and self-efficacy, two of the studies relied on quantitative data to determine teachers' level of self-efficacy related to their pedagogical beliefs and their feelings towards RtI as an innovation (Donnell & Gettinger, 2015; Nunn & Jantz, 2009). The third study conducted in 2014 employed qualitative methods to determine teachers' knowledge of RtI and their recommendations for improving implementation (Castro-Villareal, Rodriguez & Moore). These studies do not explore how teachers perceive their abilities to implement each component of the RtI model. A qualitative study is needed to explore teachers perceived self-efficacy in implementing each component of the RtI model and the possible effects their perceptions may have on student outcomes.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, the researcher has explored the concept of perceived self-efficacy and its importance. Literature examining the origin, components, and implementation of the RtI model was reviewed to create a foundation for the study of the model's relation to teachers' perceived self-efficacy. Data use and professional development were reviewed to highlight their function in both supporting and advancing self-efficacy and the implementation of RtI.

Chapter Three: Research Method

This chapter describes the research methods used in the study and includes: (a) the research questions; (b) my analytical paradigm; and (c) methods for selecting participants, data collection, data analysis, and level of approval requested from the Institutional Review Board.

A qualitative case study design was used to describe the campus level systems in place to support teachers in their implementation of RtI. It was also the purpose of this study to determine teachers perceived self-efficacy in implementing each component of the RtI model and to explore the possible effects teacher self-efficacy may have on student outcomes.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions guided this qualitative study of the implementation of the RtI model in a school district:

Research Question One: What campus-level systems have been installed to support the implementation of RtI?

Research Question Two: How do teachers perceive their efficacy concerning their knowledge and application of RtI?

Research Question Three: How do teacher perceptions of efficacy affect student outcomes within the RtI model?

RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

This study sought to understand how teachers made meaning of the world around them through their beliefs in their abilities to implement components of the RtI model. Numbers, probabilities, and statistics could not fully portray the relationships and shared understandings the researcher hoped to uncover. A qualitative research design was appropriate due to the interpretive nature of the inquiry (Creswell, 2009). In this study, the setting and its contextual data and the data collected directly from the participants were needed to create a holistic account of the case (Creswell, 2009). The participants in this study were interviewed in their natural settings, and data was collected about the everyday, ordinary practices related to the RtI famework. The interview data offered thick descriptions that captured each teacher's perception of their efficacy.

Case study was the research strategy employed to gather data. This strategy allowed the researcher to design the study and data collection around the research questions (Meyer, 2001). According to Yin (2017) the case study allows us to examine real life events and examine the boundaries between the events and the context in which they occur. A case strategy at two sites was employed to reduce bias, enhance generalizability and add confidence to the findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

SELECTING CASES

The study was situated in the northern region of Texas. The location offered the possibility to select a rural, urban, or suburban setting. The district was chosen using purposive sampling procedures. The conditions met in the sampling were: (1) the district implements response to intervention and does not rely solely on the discrepancy model to

identify students who have specific learning difficulties; (2) district-level staff support the implementation of a tiered response to intervention model; (3) the district administers a universal screener at least two times a year; and (4) students who are identified for intervention are regularly monitored to assess their progress. The researcher completed a request to conduct research in each of the two school districts that met all four criteria.

The research department from Texas Independent School District (ISD) was the first and only district to respond. The Texas ISD research department required the researcher to establish contact the Intervention Director. The Intervention Director reviewed the study materials that were submitted to the district. The Intervention Director arranged a meeting to discuss campus sites, complete a survey and review the interview questions. The researcher conducted a structured interview with district-level staff and reviewed documents to determine the stage of the district's implementation. Two K-5 schools from the selected district were identified by the Intervention Director. Each campus principal selected one teacher leader from each grade level to participate in the study. Participation was voluntary. All participants completed a consent form. Study participants were exposed to very limited risk.

Texas ISD is a large suburban district with approximately 55,000 students in Texas. The selected school district met all four conditions to be included in the study. According to a recent Texas Academic Performance Report, over 50 percent of the students were Hispanic, followed by nearly 20 percent White and less than 20 percent African American. Additionally, nearly 50 percent of the district's students were designated as At-Risk in one or more state designated areas and more than 60 percent of

all students qualified for free or reduced lunch using the National School Lunch Program Guidelines. Less than ten percent of the district's students are identified as students with disabilities. Of those students identified, over 30 percent are identified with an intellectual disability and less than 25 percent with a behavioral disability.

School A and School B are in this district and are located within four miles of each other. The schools share a neighborhood, but their demographics vary. School A served almost 600 students at the time of this study: over 60 percent of the students were Hispanic, and nearly 80 percent of all students qualified for free or reduced lunch. School B served 100 students less than School A students at the time of this study: over 40 percent of the students were Hispanic, and nearly 65 percent of all students qualified for free or reduced lunch. The percentage of students identified as At-Risk and Economically Disadvantaged exceeded the district percentage. Both campuses met the state's accountability standard for the past five years.

Both campus administrators responded favorably and agreed to allow their teachers to be interviewed. The campus administrator chose one classroom teacher leader per grade level and a teacher responsible for supporting the RtI to attend my recruitment meeting. All the recommended teachers attended the meeting and consented to attend. One teacher from each campus later withdrew consent. Participating teachers from Campus A ranged in experience from five to 24 years. Teachers at Campus B ranged from seven to 35 years of experience.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

District-level Response to Intervention administrators were asked to complete a brief survey from the Wisconsin RtI Network, School RtI All-Staff Perception Survey. The instrument was created by the Wisconsin RtI Center with the support of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. "The survey examines the status and need for improvement in four domains: (a) high quality instruction; (b) balanced [formative] assessments; (c) collaboration; and (d) leadership and organizational structures" (Wisconsin RtI Network, 2016). The purpose of this instrument is to determine the level of implementation that is expected throughout the entire district. This survey was completed by the District Intervention Director prior to being interviewed by the researcher. The Director's responses determined the district's level of implementation and set the expectation for the level of implementation on each campus.

Campus-level participants completed interviews before, during, or after their work day. The questions used in their interviews were developed specifically for this study using Bandura's (2006) Guide for Constructing Self-Efficacy Scales and School RtI All-Staff Perception Survey (2016). Questions were created to determine the participant's level of perceived self-efficacy in implementing the RtI model, their knowledge of RtI, and their level of implementation.

Campus- and district-level performance were evaluated using Shapiro and Clemens's (2009) Conceptual Model for Evaluating the Systems Effects of RtI. The use of the model is supported by Marsh's (2012) recommendations for future research on data use, which call for a clear model for evaluating efficacy and the use of credible

evidence rather than the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of participants. Appendix A is a summary data worksheet that was used to collect data about each of the participating campuses. The worksheet is intended to evaluate the RtI model at the campus level at any point in the school year, which is significant because this study examined one full year's implementation of the model. Summary data was collected in two of four areas:

1. The percentage of students who moved to a more or less intense tier of intervention during the school year
2. The number of students who were referred to Special Education compared to the who qualified

   (Shapiro & Clemens, 2009)

The data were collected by the district and provided to the researcher.

Campus-level semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted to determine individual teacher perceptions of efficacy related to the components of RtI: research-based instructional methods, measurement of students' response, and changing instruction based on data (Barth et al., 2008).

SOURCES OF DATA

Multiple sources of evidence are needed to support case study research (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2017). The researcher gathered data by reviewing all documents created to support the RtI model. The documents reviewed included forms, meeting notes, professional development handouts, budgets, implementation plans, and organizational charts. The district's Intervention Director allowed the researcher to attend the district's

yearly Response to Intervention professional development for campus administrators and Student Support Team leaders. The also researcher collected contact summary notes in addition to recording the interviews. These notes allowed the researcher to compile information about the participant that was relevant to their response. For instance, if the participant was hesitant to answer a question, that detail was recorded in the notes.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The district's Director of Intervention completed School RtI All-Staff Perception Survey to begin the study. When she indicated the survey was complete, the researcher interviewed her to follow up on her survey responses. The purpose of the survey and interview were to gain more information about the district's unique implementation of the RtI model and the district's expectations of the campuses. The director's survey results and interview responses were saved and stored on the researcher's computer.

Participants' responses and the documents collected were coded to determine their relationship to the implementation process and areas of teacher efficacy. Clustering was used to verify the study's conclusions, by categorizing the information received from each group of participants. The categorization of the clustering process also made the data easier to compare. Time was taken to note relationships between variables between campus settings. Triangulation was employed to confirm findings. The use of multiple sources of data to confirm the findings adds to the validity of the study. Within the study, findings should be replicated from site to site. The quality of the study's conclusions will be judged by their transferability and fittingness to similar sites across the country. The

intent of the study is to identify best practices to increase teacher's perceived self-efficacy and improve student outcomes. If other school districts implement these findings with the same level of success, then the quality of the data will be confirmed.

The researcher reviewed all the documents used or referenced during the professional development. Each document was analyzed and coded. The school district analyzed student outcome data by grade level using the Summary Data Worksheet for Organizing the Evaluation of RtI (Shapiro & Clemens, 2009). The district provided summary data responsive to:

1. The percentage of students who moved to a more or less intense tier of intervention during the school year
2. The number of students who were referred to Special Education compared to the who qualified

   (Shapiro & Clemens, 2009)

The researcher reviewed the student outcome data prepared by the district.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The primary researcher is an employee in the district. The Intervention Director is a well-respected leader in the community. She and the researcher are acquainted. Prior to the 2007–2008 school year, the researcher supported the district's Student Support Teams. These interdisciplinary teams of educators are an integral part of Tier 3 in the district's current RtI model. Educators on the team are responsible for working together to provide or identify supports for students who were not progressing academically or

behaviorally. From 2007 to the through the summer of 2010, the researcher worked with a team of teachers, administrators, and counselors to develop and implement the RtI model. Since early 2007, the Student Support Team has had the authority to recommend students for Special Education testing. Now, the team can analyze and make recommendations based on the student's rate of progress in response to Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions.

Given the researcher's past involvement in the implementation of the model, interview questions were reviewed by the district's Intervention Director prior to campus participation to ensure questions were objective. The researcher was aware of potential biases that could be reflected in data analysis.

The researcher received full approval from the university's Institutional Review Board to proceed with the study. Following the university's approval, the researcher identified the district for the study. The researcher then completed the district's research study application. District approval was given; however, the researcher had to agree to several conditions to proceed with the study. The district identified the Intervention Director as the point of contact. The director chose the schools the researcher could contact. Additionally, the researcher could only make two attempts to contact potential participants and could not use any district resources to initiate contact. The researcher's employment in the district was not shared with the campus level participants by the researcher.

Participants were audio recorded. Audio recordings were stored securely and only the researcher has access to the recordings. Recordings were made using the researcher's

personal digital voice recorder and then downloaded to the researcher's personal password-protected computer in an encrypted, password-protected file named using the participant's pseudonym and date of the interview. Once downloaded, all files were deleted from the voice recorder. When not in use, the recorder remained in the researcher's locked file cabinet. The researcher transcribed the recordings and stored the files on her personal password protected computer. Each transcribed interview was stored in a separate encrypted, password-protected text file and named using the participant's pseudonym and date of the interview. All data sources will be maintained for a five-year period. Recorded and transcribed interviews will be destroyed by electronic file erasure.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The purpose of this research is to inform and to improve the practice of educators. The research will add to the growing body of knowledge of response to intervention. The researcher will better understand the process each district and individual campus experienced to fully implement RtI. The relationship among the observed variables will lead to the identification of common characteristics among schools and districts with successful implementations of RtI.

Chapter Four: Findings

The purpose of this study is to describe the campus level systems to support teachers in their implementation of RtI. It is also the purpose of this study to determine teachers' perceived self-efficacy in implementing each component of the RtI model and to explore the possible effects it may have on student outcomes. The research will add to the growing body of knowledge of response to intervention.

This chapter provides the findings and themes that emerged from multiple sources of data in response to the three research questions that guided the study:

Research Question One: What campus-level systems have been installed to support the implementation of RtI?

Research Question Two: How do teachers perceive their efficacy concerning their knowledge and application of RtI?

Research Question Three: How do teacher perceptions of efficacy affect student outcomes within the RtI model?

This qualitative study employed a multiple case study method to seek responses to the research questions. Data were collected from the Intervention Director using the School RtI All-Staff Perception Survey developed by the Wisconsin RtI Center (2016). The researcher then interviewed the director and performed a review of all documents created by the district to support the RtI model to determine the district's level of implementation. This contributed to the findings responsive to research question 1: What campus-level systems have been installed to support the implementation of RtI? The researcher also shared the interview questions used at each campus.

Campus teachers were interviewed to determine their knowledge of the RtI model and their perceived self-efficacy in implementing integral components of the district's RtI model. Twelve teachers participated in the interview process, which allowed the researcher to gather data responsive to research question 2: How do teachers perceive their efficacy concerning their knowledge and application of RtI? The district provided summary data to answer research question 3: How do teacher perceptions of efficacy affect student outcomes of the campus-level implementation of RtI?

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE: WHAT CAMPUS LEVEL SYSTEMS HAVE BEEN INSTALLED TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RTI?

In response to this question the researcher requested that the Intervention director complete the School RtI All Staff Perception Survey. The survey results were summarized by the researcher and used to inform an interview the Intervention Director. From the interview, the researcher identified four structures present on each campus to support the implementation of RtI: Daily Dedicated Intervention Time, Elementary Intervention meetings, district-wide personnel to support the campus implementation of the RtI model, and clear guidance regarding data collection and use. The researcher relied on the interview with the Intervention Director, the Director's responses to the School RtI All Staff Perception Survey, and a review of district documents to develop codes and themes related to this question. The researcher triangulated data from each source confirm the validity of the findings.

The Intervention Director's responses to the School RtI All Staff Perception Survey indicated that all the components of the RtI model were in place or partially in

place. The director was confident both campuses would have systems in place for the successful delivery of interventions, universal screening, and progress monitoring. Collaboration within the system was in place. Campus-level staff had the ability to collaborate frequently by grade level and content and periodically across grade levels. The director's survey indicated that three of the features related to the delivery of universal curriculum and instruction were in place. Three features were only partially in place: the delivery of universal curriculum and instruction is (1) based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills; (2) differentiated to match each student's need; (3) furthered through engagement with parents/guardians. The director expressed that the curriculum was most in need of improvement to ensure it is based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. The director stated, "We do have a curriculum that is determined by grade level and comes from the state for each content area. I do think that it is partially in place, and it is still being revised and improved within the district. We've set that as a priority for the last four or five years, and we've made some slight improvements."

The director's responses indicate the district is in the full implementation stage. District and campus personnel are implementing the model and refining their practices as needed. The interview with the director and the document review revealed that the director and other district-level administrators have worked to ensure additional structures are in place to support the campus implementation of the RtI model. Those structures are Daily Dedicated Intervention Time, Elementary Intervention meetings, district-wide personnel to support the campus implementation of the RtI model, and clear guidance regarding data collection and use.

Daily Intervention Time

Every elementary has a 50-minute dedicated intervention time in addition to core instruction in math and reading. Half of the time is spent on reading intervention and half on math intervention. During this time students who need intervention may receive instruction from another teacher on the same grade level or another campus support teacher. The district expectation is that people providing intervention are "very targeted and specific in [their] support."

Elementary Intervention Meetings

The district employs several meeting types within the RtI model, each with its own purpose. Table 1 describes the purpose, participants, and frequency of each meeting.

Table 1. Description of Elementary Intervention Meetings based on document shared by the district entitled Elementary Intervention Meetings at a Glance

Meeting Name	Purpose	Participants	Frequency
Data Meeting	• Analyze student data • Form or rearrange student intervention groups • Discuss student needs • Develop a plan for student intervention	• Grade-Level Team • Interventionist • ESL Teacher • Administrator (optional)	Monthly
RtI Meeting – Tier 2	• Inform the parents of universal screening results • Identify the student as Tier 2 • Discuss plans for intervention Collaborate with the parent about the assistance needed at home.	• Parent • Classroom Teacher • Counselor or Administrator (optional)	Once each semester
Student Support Team Meeting – Tier 3	• Analyze recent student data • Develop an action plan • Determine the need for additional resources • Provide additional administrative support • Update the plan for parental support	• Parent • Classroom Teacher • Counselor • Interventionist • Administrator • Additional staff as needed who may have knowledge of supports the student needs	Every 45 Instructional days

The data meeting was addressed by all participants at least once. Every teacher at each grade level participates in the meeting. The meeting is led by the Interventionist. The grade level teams analyze universal screening data three times a year to determine who is at risk and form or reform groups. Progress monitoring data is the focus of the

remaining monthly meetings. Teachers bring their concerns to the group and share students' rate of improvement and response to interventions. The director stated that

> some campuses do it once a month, some do it once every six weeks, so long as it happens within a grading cycle. We want to group kids by like need at Tier 2, so we can be very targeted, but then as we move forward as kids make progress, or don't make progress, then we've got to regroup. We must have flexible grouping to meet that purpose across that grade level.

Teachers also expressed that the meetings were a source of support where they could voice concerns and get ideas from other teachers to work with struggling students.

District-wide personnel supporting campus implementation

The Interventionist is a role at every elementary campus. They use a specific curriculum for reading and math to support students at Tier 3. The Intervention Director stated

> They provide the intensive individualized support needed for those students that are declining academically and have many gaps in their learning. They can support Tier 2 students depending on need. We have a 50-minute schedule across the day, and so depending upon the grade level there may not be any identified Tier 3 students in that grade level, so then they would work with the Tier 2 group.

The interventionist is qualified to provide intervention to students who need intense intervention in a small group setting. They choose from a few district-approved curricula to provide direct, targeted instruction to Tier 3 students. The interventionist does not

provide direct support to the teacher; however, they may be consulted regarding the use of specific interventions. Interventionists receive specialized professional development. They may provide professional development for staff as requested.

Instructional Support Teacher (IST)

The role of the IST is to support the teacher in the implementation of the district's instructional program. As described by the Director, ISTs should "act as instructional coaches so that we can look at support that's needed at Tier 1 differentiation, and Tier 1 intervention, and good Tier 1 pedagogy, as well as to support Tier 2 intervention so we can close gaps more quickly and get those kids back up to access learning on level." They support the teacher in the art of teaching, interpreting data, responding to student needs through intervention and coaching teachers. The IST role is focused on academic needs and does not consider behavior. Professional development for this role is provided by assessment companies, peers, the Director and experts in the field of reading and math instruction.

Intervention Trainer

The district employs two intervention trainers for all campuses. These employees are teachers who are considered expert in the district's RtI model and the instruction of struggling learners. They organize districtwide professional development opportunities and respond to individual campus needs identified by the campus principal or interventionist. The role ensures that anyone who implements RtI receives a consistent, district sanctioned message regarding each component of the RtI model. The Intervention

Director stated that the trainers may provide individualized help for struggling teachers by modeling lessons, planning for intervention lessons and interpreting data to determine intervention needs. The teachers at both campuses referred to these three roles collectively as the iTeam.

District Guidance on Data Collection and Use

A review of documents related to the RtI model revealed that data collection, fidelity to the RtI model and communication are important to the District. The researcher attended the yearly RtI professional development for Student Support Team leaders and campus administrators. Participants in the professional development were given a copy of the Response to Intervention Manual. The manual details the District's model. Anyone in the district who is responsible for the implementation of RtI has access to the document. The manual details documents and guidelines relevant to the RtI process, descriptions of the model and checklists to ensure fidelity at each tier. Appendices C and D contain excerpts of the manual.

Basic data collection is described in the manual. The universal screener, the MAP, is intended to help teachers decide if students are performing on grade level. The Director stated "our MAP test is used to measure academic progress, to see where students are weak in specific skill areas. We use our data to build a profile of a student. We see what we need to do." The MAP three times a year. In between the fall, winter, and spring assessments teacher developed interim assessments are used for progress monitoring.

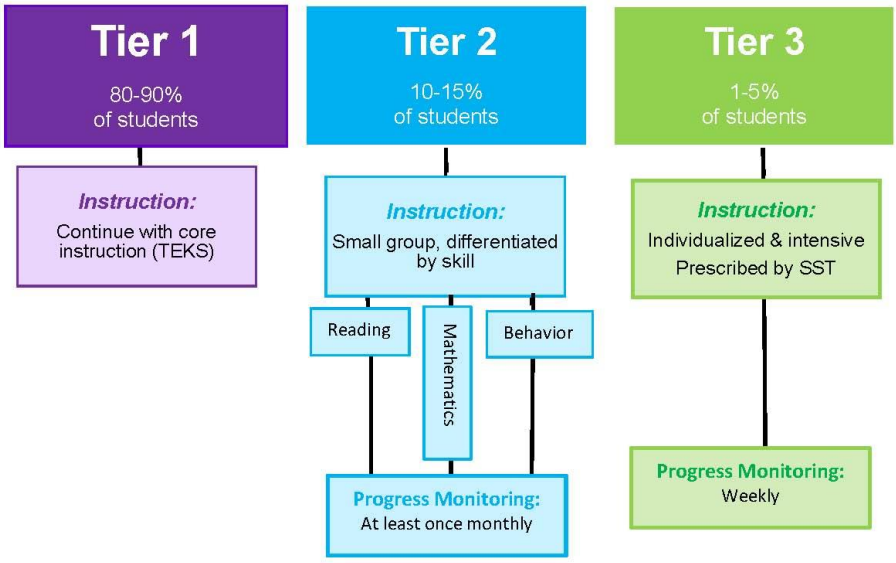


Figure 1. District's Progress Monitoring: purpose, use and frequency. Excerpt from the district's *RtI Manual*.

Progress Monitoring is used to monitor students who perform below grade level on the universal screener. The RtI Manual provides guidance about how data is collected and used within the system. The District ensures data is used by providing professional development.

> We train them about data driven intervention instruction and provide resources to assist them with that. They do adjust their intervention based on our MAP data, so that they can see where a student has other gaps that have developed, or hopefully, that they've been accelerated.

The researcher identified daily intervention time, intervention meetings, personnel supporting the implementation of RtI, and district guidance on data collection and use as the structures installed at each campus to support the RtI model. The interview with the Intervention Director, her responses to the School RtI All Staff Perception Survey, observing the districtwide RtI professional development and a review of district documents to develop codes and themes related to this question provided data responsive to this question. A review of the notes from interviews with 12 teachers were consistent with these findings. Data from each source confirmed the validity of the findings.

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO: HOW DO TEACHERS PERCEIVE THEIR EFFICACY CONCERNING THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND APPLICATION OF RTI?

The researcher visited each campus to interview teachers who were identified by their principals as teacher leaders. The response to research question two begins with a review of teacher responses and the themes that emerged. During the interview, teachers were asked to rate their efficacy in implementing core components of the RtI model. Possible barriers to developing self-efficacy emerged from these findings. The researcher found replication of responses between the two campuses which adds to the validity of the findings responsive to this question.

Interview questions 1-5 were designed to determine teachers' knowledge and attitudes about the RtI model. Questions 6-8 allowed teachers to discuss their perceived self-efficacy in applying the RtI model. The researcher evaluated all interview responses and adopted Data use, Demographics, Leadership, Motivation, Professional Development, Providing Intervention, RtI Process and Teacher Support as early codes.

Two additional codes Demotivation and Peer Support emerged as subcodes. Data use most frequently co-occurred with the code Processes. Teacher Support was the second most applied code co-occurring most frequently with professional development. Using the process of triangulation, several major themes surfaced: Data driven decisions and lowered self-efficacy, following the RtI process, and supports for teachers.

Data driven decisions and lower self-efficacy beliefs

Teachers on both campuses expressed their knowledge of the RtI process and its reliance on data to determine movement among the tiers. They cited two main reasons for their support of data use – the need for data to drive the RtI process allowing teachers to determine and address student needs and data as evidence to justify their decisions to seek more or less intervention for students. Teacher AKG shared that most teachers relied solely on the data collected from progress monitoring and the universal screening processes to move students from one tier to another. Teacher AKG understood the importance of collecting data throughout the intervention process.

> We see a continuous growth instead of just looking monthly to see if they are going up or down. So, with the monitoring we're able to determine if we are meeting their needs. So, if we need to adjust whatever instruction we're providing, we can.

Four teachers expressed doubts about the data used to determine a student's placement in Tier 2 or Tier 3. Their concerns were for three groups of students: (1) students who continued to struggle despite showing improvement on the progress

monitoring assessment; (2) students who did not perform well on the universal screener but responded very quickly to the intervention given by the teacher; and (3) students who have multiple gaps and perform well below their current grade level. Teacher B4 described the tension felt when relying solely on data from the universal screener and progress monitoring assessments.

> The data will tell you, they should be at this percentage at this time. I just have to go with that. Because many times, you have to take a side. Oh, he's the sweetest kid in the class. But the data shows that he needs support here. So, I think just focusing on the side of truly being able to use data.

While this teacher expressed her fidelity to the RtI process, she also worried about those students who were not making satisfactory progress. She questioned the purpose of RtI and its ability to provide adequate supports to her students who continued to struggle following intervention:

> But yet, when [they] take tests, these things that we're being measured by, they are testing them on the gaps. But they're testing them on grade level or sometimes even higher-level skills. I always ask, what about those students who need their gaps filled? When do they ever get to that point?

The students in Teacher A1's intervention groups are younger and just beginning to read.

> I felt like at the meetings maybe they just needed more time or more documentation, where sometimes I can kind of see it and know, but it's like well the testing, oh well, they scored low, these two tests in 1st grade but, you know

> we want to give them another year… I don't know if I'm making the right decision.

She questioned if the data were leading her to the correct decision about the duration and intensity of intervention her first grade students received. While these teachers expressed doubts about the accuracy of the assessments and the resultant data, they did not indicate that they abandoned the RtI process. Instead, they relied on their data meetings to discuss their misgivings and receive support from the IST or interventionist to respond to their students' needs.

Supports for Data Use

The data meetings supported teachers in the evaluation and use of student data. Teachers also used the meetings to share successful interventions. Teacher B4 discussed her participation in data meetings and the level of support they gave her in selecting the appropriate interventions.

> And so, it's just a constant circle of we go to, we come in here, we talk about this data. "Okay, let's go back and do it this way." And then we come back. Or did that work or? So, just a constant cycle of training yourself as well because it is a process. It's not just like oh, because I'm a teacher I automatically know how to do these things. And I think that's a misconception sometimes.

The uncertainty in the assessment revealed an uncertainty in the application of instruction for struggling students. Teacher B4 identified a support common to all participants in the study, the grade level data meetings. Both campuses employed this

meeting structure to review data from all assessments common to the RtI model, to share student progress, successful instructional techniques and to group and regroup students according to their needs. Teacher B4 reveals a level of vulnerability in her response. Teachers at both campuses indicated that the grade level meetings were places where they felt free to ask questions and request assistance in developing interventions if needed. Teachers also feel free to share their success in the meetings. Teacher A3 discussed a subtle change in the process for the current school year.

> This year, they're trying something new where our interventionists or the campus interventionists, they meet with every grade level after an assessment. They have all the data. If someone did very well on a specific skill, then they have that teacher share how did they do or what did they do.

The interventionist facilitates the meeting structure by preparing the data and bringing teachers together discussions of the data. The interventionist does not provide all the answers for the teachers. The teachers provide support for each other. The Interventionist from Campus A describes her role and how she works with the ESL teacher.

> When we meet with teachers, we let them know, "This is a Tier 3 group. These are the other kids." Then, we give the teachers also background on previous years, because they might not know the kids… It helps them make a better decision - "Do we continue Tier 2? Is it language or do we need to move to Tier 3? Or any other type of testing, like dyslexia or speech?"

Following the RtI Process

Teacher B2 summarized the positive attitude all teachers in the study shared toward the district's RtI process.

> It keep[s] us focused on how a student is doing, and because it's a system. It's clear. It's right there on paper in black and white because you have the data and you have a way of staying focused.

The RtI process is well documented in the district. The researcher reviewed each document required or suggested in the district's RtI manual. A total of 13 documents memorialize the process from Tier 1 to Tier 3. Table 3 describes each document, its purpose within the process and the person responsible for its completion. The PSM worksheet should be completed for every student in need of Tier 2 intervention. Successful completion of the document serves as a notification of supports and progress to parents of students identified for intervention. As the teachers complete the document, they are guided through a process to define the area of concern, analyze the concern, state the desired academic goal, plan the intervention and progress monitoring and prepare for review of student progress later. The process described on the worksheet changes slightly for Tier 3. Tier 3 intervention is provided by the interventionist and the documentation is an official plan called the Student Support Team Action Plan. Signatures are required on each document to ensure that each signatory is responsible for the implementation of the plan regardless of the level of formality. Surprisingly, only three teachers remarked about completing the forms necessary for students receiving Tier 2 intervention or to move a

student to Tier 3. They expressed that the process was time consuming, but they realized they completed the process for a small group of students.

Many of the forms ensure teachers are compliant with the district's guidelines while others simply document their efforts to support struggling students. The Interventionist at Campus A described her process for ensuring forms were entered into the district's online documentation system.

> So right now, we're in the process of scanning all the PSMs (problem solving worksheets) for our Tier 2 kids. Doing the action plans at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. The action plans, have SST meetings, reach out to parents, look at the progress monitoring at the beginning of each month. And any questions the teachers might have or any help that they need.

Teachers provide Tier 2 intervention during a set time each day. Students are grouped according to their needs and instructed by one of their grade level teachers, an ESL teacher or possibly the Interventionist. The intervention period is lasts for 50 minutes with 25 minutes dedicated to math and 25 minutes dedicated to reading. Teachers perceived a high degree of self-efficacy in providing interventions but were concerned about the short amount of time they were able to devote to instruction. Teacher A5 remarked, "Really by the time you start something with reading it's already time to move onto math. You don't really get much done." Teacher A1 indicated the lack of time in Tier 2 was a factor in referring a student to Tier 3 where they could receive longer, more specialized intervention.

The district's RtI process indicates that students must be referred to Tier 3 and reviewed by the Student Support Team (SST) before Tier 3 intervention can begin. "I would say the hardest part is knowing when they need to change tiers, and then how to go about that. The intervention part and knowing how to address each student comes much more natural." Two teachers echoed this statement made by Teacher A4.

Teacher B4's statement characterizes the theme well, "you're trying to make it work for everyone involved, or you're trying to see a group, but I'm trying to break this part up for these two students, and then work a few minutes with these two students." The District's process is not a perfect fit for all students and their teachers. Teachers adjust to make the process work within their context. They adjust their student groupings, the time spent with small groups or individual students, interventions, teaching techniques and collaboration styles to ensure the District's RtI processes and procedures run smoothly and students receive the intervention they need.

Supports for teachers

Teachers from Campus A and Campus B acknowledged their Interventionists, Instructional Support Teachers (IST) and ESL teachers as a source of support for implementation of the RtI process. Teacher B3 describes their collective efforts

> [T]hey provide a support through their trainings. They give ideas to help intervention and show us where the resources are, which is helpful to not have to find those on your own. They're supporting us through the MAP test as well –

helping us proctor and monitor, which can be challenging sometimes with MAP. Of course, they service the students based on whether their ESL or tier 3.

As described earlier, each role fulfills a unique function within the process. Teacher B3 characterizes the central function of each role as ensuring everyone communicates to benefit the struggling students at their campus. "…you've gotta keep communicating and supporting each other because it works best for the students." Teacher B4 identified an additional support provided by this group of campus support teachers, professional development.

Possible Barriers to Perceived Self-efficacy

During the course of the interview, teachers were asked to rate their perceived self-efficacy in implementing components of the RtI model. The scale ranged from zero to 100. Zero indicated that they 'cannot do' the task. A rating of 50 indicated moderate ability and 100 indicated certainty.

Table 2. Teachers' average self-efficacy ratings by campus

Question Stem	Campus A	Campus B	Overall Average
Sufficient Intervention	77	88	83
Respond During Session	85	96	91
Adjust based on results	84	93	89
Select Intervention	77	85	81
Deliver intervention	87	90	89
Apply PD	75	89	82
Work with a Team	90	95	93
Positive Impact	97	93	95

The self-ratings at Campus A were somewhat lower than those at Campus B in five of the six areas. All teachers showed a very high sense of self-efficacy applying most components of the model. Teachers expressed their lowest levels of perceived efficacy related to these three components of the RtI model: selecting an appropriate intervention; deciding when a student has had sufficient intervention and needs to move from Tier 2 to Tier 3; and applying professional development I have received in the implementation of RtI. Selecting an appropriate intervention based on the needs of a group of struggling students had the lowest average score of 81.

Selecting an appropriate intervention

Teachers use student data to select appropriate interventions. The process seems very logical, yet the responses given in the interviews surfaced the uncertainty teachers feel about their ability to select the appropriate intervention for their small groups.

Teacher BK5 discussed the size of her groups and amount of time to intervene as reasons for the lower perceived self-efficacy.

> Like my kindergarten group, I have 15 kids, which is a lot. So, I'm splitting them in two and seeing ones who are really struggling. The ones with very limited English while others are doing an online language program. The group is so big, it's almost like having a regular classroom. I need another whole 50 minutes with them, the really beginning speakers.

Teacher B4 expressed difficulty in addressing the needs of the whole group given the diverse areas of need. She expressed a need for an intervention that would allow her to differentiate for the exact needs of the learners. Instead, she must generalize her instruction.

> [Y]ou may have six students in a group with five of them on different levels. That's one of those situations where you're trying to make it work for everyone involved. You're trying to see a group, but I'm trying to break this part up for these two students. Then, I work a few minutes with these two students, or even just doing a test where it puts everything that you need into that one activity, but it differentiates it enough where you're applying it to everything that all the students need.

Similarly, Teacher A5 asked, "[H]ow do I make sure that I'm really reaching out to all of them?" Identifying an evidenced based practice was an issue for Teacher AKG. She

wanted concrete proof that the intervention would be the right fit for the student to ensure she made the best use of the student's limited time with her. The resources were available; she just was not sure she was making the best choice. Teacher 1KG shared that the District had recently changed intervention materials for math. She would need time to learn more about the new materials. Teacher A1 also discussed materials and preparation time.

> You know, finding time to prepare for the lessons, to get the supplies ready. It's a huge, you know. That's definitely a problem, you know. It's just, because it's something we didn't have to do before. It's another thing to do. And it's ... You're sometimes pulling things out at the last minute. It's not as smooth as it could be.

Deciding when a student has had sufficient intervention and needs to move from Tier 2 to tier 3

Within the District's RtI process, the decision to move from Tier 2 to Tier 3 is not an individual teacher decision. Teachers must consult with other teachers as well as the school RtI Chairperson before the decision can be finalized. The teacher, however, must make the initial decision to recommend that a student would benefit from Tier 3 intervention because they have not made adequate progress in Tier 2. Teacher A4 shared that the RtI process lowered her perceived self-efficacy in this area. She stated

> It's the process that is difficult sometimes. Just knowing what the steps are and the process itself. The intervention, that comes pretty naturally. It's the paperwork and the process.

Teacher A1 addressed the decision-making authority of the team in contrast to her own feelings about the needs of a struggling student. She stated

> sometimes I feel like they need to go to Tier 3 but they want to go to the meeting you know the group, or the team that's there. They will say, "Oh, let's give them a little more time." I feel lost at times with that. Because I want to move them up but then I know we can't move everybody to Tier 3.

Teacher B4 shared her feelings about a student's progress and the determination of the team. Students made progress, but as a teacher she felt the student was still not achieving at the level necessary to be successful.

Applying professional development I have received in the implementation of RtI

Teachers struggled to recall professional development that was specific to the RtI process. Teacher A1 recalled professional development she received related to the District's guided reading initiative. She discussed the whole group sessions that she believed to be "good" professional development. Several teachers addressed the professional development they received in a whole group setting. Teacher A5 shared that most of their professional development related to RtI was about the process and administrative tasks. She stated that she never really got the 'full training' on recommended lessons to use with Tier 2 students.

Every teacher mentioned data use during their interviews. Every teacher also mentioned peer support or the support of an interventionist, instructional support coach or

ESL teacher. Few teachers viewed the support which was often provided during structured grade level meetings or during one on one coaching sessions as professional development. Teacher B2 addressed the variety of professional development provided by the district in multiple settings from staff meetings to professional development sessions She seemed satisfied with the variety of professional development offered. She expressed, “We've had training, not one-on-one, but let's say with just our school where someone comes just to talk to us, so we've had a good variety of training throughout.” Teacher A4 discussed informal meetings and coaching sessions. “[P]rofessional development, we have a lot of informal times where we discuss the important topic of making sure our students’ needs are being met.”

Teacher B4 addressed the personalized development available on campus and praised the group responsible for supporting the campus - the Interventionist, ESL teacher, and IST.

> We have, of course, the i-Team who’s always helping us. They're constantly giving us trainings. I say them first because they're not in a classroom setting, they're able to go to more specialized professional developments. They bring that information back to us. They do a superb job in always being there for us, whether it's something that they've already explained or taught us or if it's something brand new... All you have to do is call.

Overall perceived teacher self-efficacy was high at both campuses. Teachers identified several barriers to self-efficacy that were directly related to specific components of the RtI process.

Table 3. Identified Barriers to Perceived Teacher Self-efficacy in the Implementation of RtI

Component of RtI	Barrier
Selecting and appropriate intervention for a group	• Large group size • Diverse needs within the same group • Lack of familiarity with the intervention materials
Deciding when a student has had sufficient intervention and needs to move from Tier 2 to Tier 3	• Lack of a clear understanding of the RtI process • Lack of confidence in the assessment • Reliance on feelings rather than data
Applying professional development I have received in the implementation of RtI	• Limited definition of professional development • Limited professional development about specific interventions • Focus on process rather than interventions

The three themes that emerged from these findings were data driven decision making and lowered self-efficacy, following the process and supports for teachers. These themes were based on practices that largely served to support teacher self-efficacy related to RtI. The barriers identified in Table 3 are also responsive to question two which asked how teachers perceive their efficacy. Factors that support and suppress perceptions of self-efficacy are acceptable responses.

RESEARCH QUESTION THREE: HOW DO TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF EFFICACY AFFECT STUDENT OUTCOMES OF THE CAMPUS-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION OF RTI?

The findings in response to this question are based on data collected by the district and given to the researcher. The Intervention coordinator arranged for summary data responsive to questions from Shapiro and Clemens's (2009) Conceptual Model for Evaluating the Systems Effects of RtI to be sent to the researcher. The researcher was unable to match grade level performance to specific teachers. Instead overall campus level data must be generalized to respond to this question.

The self-ratings from Table 2 confirm that teachers expressed the highest degree in response to the prompt "Have a positive impact on the success of a student who struggles academically". There was little variance in the self-scoring on the item. In response to this research question, the researcher looked at two factors over the past year of RtI implementation:

1. The percentage of students who moved to a more or less intense tier of intervention during the school year
2. The number of students who were referred to Special Education compared to the students who qualified

(Shapiro & Clemens, 2009)

The percentage of students who moved to a more or less intense tier of intervention during the school year. During the 2017-18 school year Campus A began the school year with 15% of students receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention. By the middle of the year, 89 students or 14% were receiving intervention. By the end of the year the number decreased to 63. The overall percentage of students receiving intervention

decreased by four percentage points at Campus A from the middle to the end of year administrations of the universal screener. The same administration indicated that 23 students had responded to their intervention and left intervention for Tier 1 instruction. Campus A referred 18 students for Special Education services from its Tier 3 intervention groups. These students were not making adequate progress toward their academic goals. Eleven students qualified for Special Education services. Teachers were 61% accurate in their recommendation rate during the 2017-18 school year.

Campus B began the school year with 19% of students receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention. By the middle of the year, 65 students or 13% were receiving intervention. By the end of the year the number increased slightly to 67. By the end of the year, two fewer students required Tier 3 intervention; however, 4 additional students moved from Tier 1 instruction to Tier 2 intervention from the middle of the year to the end of the year. The Special Education referral numbers were lower at Campus B. Students who were referred for Special Education services were more likely to qualify. Eight students were referred from Tier 3 intervention and each student qualified for services. At Campus B, if students were referred for Special Education services, they were highly likely to qualify indicating teachers were accurate in their assessment of student needs.

The percentage of students who received intervention during the school year decreased from 15 to 11 percent at Campus A and from 19 to 14 percent at Campus B. which indicates teachers were successful in using the process at both campuses. The inaccuracy of referrals for special education services indicates a lack of knowledge of student needs. Teacher responses regarding their perceived self-efficacy were similar

between Campus A and Campus B. A review of their overall self-ratings shows that teachers at Campus A rated themselves slightly lower than teachers at Campus B.

The limited findings for question three are not sufficient to yield a complete response. A closer look at grade level outcomes is needed to determine how teacher self-efficacy affected student outcomes.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The District began its RtI journey in 2007. In 2010 the district's Intervention Department was developed to provide support for teachers in their implementation of RtI. The researcher found that the district was fully implementing the model at both campuses. The structures the Director described in the interview were present in both campuses. The district installed several structures to ensure the successful implementation of the RtI Model: Daily Dedicated Intervention Time, Elementary Intervention meetings, district-wide personnel to support the campus implementation of the RtI model, and clear guidance regarding data collection and use. The teachers who participated in the study indicated that the structures contributed to their positive feelings about the RtI process and their ability to implement the model successfully. They relied on the districtwide campus support personnel to provide interventions for Tier 3 students, collect, organize and interpret data, provide professional development, coaching, and plan interventions. Barriers to their perceived self-efficacy included group size, familiarity with the intervention materials, limited professional development, and a reliance on feelings rather than data.

While most teachers were positive about the RtI model, they still expressed doubts in the data they used to make decisions. The district's RtI processes ensure that teachers attend monthly data meetings where they can discuss their assessments and interventions. The manuals and forms further ensure fidelity to the district's RtI model. The basis of the RtI model is strong Tier 1 instruction. The Director stated that the Tier 1 curriculum had been evolving over the past four years.

Teachers expressed very high perceived self-efficacy in improving student outcomes through the RtI model. They were knowledgeable about the components of the RtI model and how they should be used to benefit struggling students. Evaluation of teacher interviews revealed three themes: Teachers' data driven decisions and doubts, Making the RtI Process Work, and Implementation Supports for Teachers. All teachers relied on data to implement the model and determine student needs. One-third of the teachers expressed doubts in the accuracy of the assessments in identifying student needs, yet they did not abandon the process. They credited their participation in data meetings with their fidelity to the RtI model. Teachers identified multiple supports specific to the district that positively affected their perceived self- efficacy.

Both campuses are homes to teachers with high perceived self-efficacy in impacting the success of students who struggle academically. At Campus A, student performance on the universal screener during the 2017-18 school year indicates that teachers were effective in providing intervention which moved students to less intense levels of intervention by the end of the school year. Campus B yielded similar results. Student who were referred to Special Education from Tier 3 intervention qualified at a

rate of 100 percent indicating that teachers were effective in identifying and addressing student's needs at the appropriate, less intense tiers of intervention.

Limitations

Three limitations arose from this study. The teacher leaders selected for interviews were all experienced educators. At a campus where teacher turnover is high, the years of experience a teacher had would be expected to be lower. Therefore, there may be a range of experience represented in teachers holding leadership positions. Teachers chosen for the study had five or more years of experience and at least four years of experience in their current grade level and at their current campus. The sampling of teachers was relatively small with only one campus support professional per campus and one teacher per grade level. Interviews with all teachers providing intervention or support to the RtI model would have yielded a wider range of perceived self-efficacy. Teachers were asked to rate themselves during the interview. Social pressure, reflexivity or social bias may have motivated the participant to answer more positively while face to face with the researcher (Yin, 2017). The final limitation was data collection for the third question. The data were summarized by the district then given to the researcher. Grade level data from each campus were needed to fully answer research question three.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, the researcher has presented the findings about the district's implementation of the RtI model, teachers perceived self-efficacy at 2 campuses and their level of effectiveness in addressing student needs within the RtI model. Supports and

barriers to positive perceived self-efficacy were identified. The final chapter will relate the findings to the current literature in RtI and perceived self-efficacy. The researcher will also discuss implications for action and recommendations for further research.

Chapter Five: Summary, Discussion, and Implications

INTRODUCTION

The Response to Intervention model a whole school reform model. Properly implemented, RtI promises to bridge learning gaps for students who may struggle behaviorally or academically. The process relies heavily on the interpretation of data and the selection of appropriate interventions, the model would not exist without effective instruction from competent teachers. To implement the model effectively, teachers must master each of its components. Their perceived self-efficacy is linked to their willingness to take on the challenging work of providing appropriate interventions and their persistence in teaching struggling learners. This study explored how teachers' sense of efficacy in implementing the components of the RtI model affects their implementation and student outcomes. This study did not concern itself with individual interventions delivered by teachers or campus leadership.

Statement of the Problem

The success of the model depends on teachers perceived self-efficacy to implement response to intervention effectively. Self-efficacy depends on contexts (Bandura, 2006). The campus culture, materials available, student needs and leadership are all factors that could determine a teacher's perception of self-efficacy. The last study of perceived self-efficacy and RtI occurred before the practice was so widely used nearly a decade ago (Nunn & Jantz, 2009). Given the widespread implementation and passage of time. A study is needed to gauge perceptions among teachers who have always taught in schools

implementing RtI or teachers who may have experienced greater self-efficacy with another model or set of instructional strategies.

Components of the RtI model such as universal screening, intervention and progress monitoring have been used in schools for decades. While they have not been researched extensively as they pertain to the RtI model, research on each discrete component has been performed (Dougherty Stahl, Keane, & Simic, 2013; Kozleski & Huber, 2010; O'Connor & Freeman, 2012). The literature revealed that researchers are applying evidence from other areas particularly implementation of other reforms such as new curricula or instructional practices. The transportability of some of the components from the research setting to the classroom in the local education agency is a limitation on the implementation of the model (Kratochwill, Volpiansky, Clements, & Ball, 2007; Kozleski & Huber, 2010; O'Connor & Freeman, 2012). To overcome this limitation frequent, intense and durable staff development is needed in the areas of assessment, intervention activities and the use of systemic change skills. Such training should allow for frequent instances for the participants to learn actively. The professional development should also be aligned with the instructional content area of the teacher and their personal and district goals and objectives (Desimone, Porter, Birman, Garet, & Yoon, 2002).

Similarly, qualitative studies have been conducted to evaluate perceived self-efficacy focus on supporting struggling students or students receiving specialized services (Wang, 2017). Most studies of teacher self-efficacy are conducted using surveys with little or no face to face contact allowing the researcher to discuss the meaning behind each response, the hopes and fears of the teachers.

The RtI model requires districts to change their paradigms for professional development, assessment, and service to all students. In light of those changes research is needed to examine how to best support teachers in their development of self-efficacy in relation to the RtI model.

Purpose of the Study

District and campus administrators must work together to build the model that works best for their organization based on identified needs and resources. Teachers must use the model to improve student outcomes. The purpose of this study was to describe the campus level systems to support teachers in their implementation of RtI. It was also the purpose of this study to determine teachers' perceived self-efficacy in implementing each component of the RtI model and to explore the possible effects it may have on student outcomes.

Research Questions

The implementation of the response to intervention model relies upon teachers who believe in their abilities to implement each component of the RtI model. Examining and documenting the systems in place to support the RtI model will be beneficial when gauging teachers' degree of perceived self-efficacy to implement the model and affect student achievement.

Research Question One: What campus-level systems have been installed to support the implementation of RtI?

Research Question Two: How do teachers perceive their efficacy concerning their knowledge and application of RtI?

Research Question Three: How do teacher perceptions of efficacy affect student outcomes within the RtI model?

Research Methods and Design

This study sought to understand how teachers made meaning of the world around them through their beliefs in their abilities to implement components of the RtI model. Numbers, probabilities, and statistics could not fully portray the relationships and shared understandings the researcher hoped to uncover. A qualitative research design was appropriate due to the interpretive nature of the inquiry (Creswell, 2009). In this study, the setting and its contextual data and the data collected directly from the participants were needed to create a holistic account of the case (Creswell, 2009). The participants in this study were interviewed in their natural settings, and data was collected about the everyday, ordinary practices related to the RtI famework. The interview data offered thick descriptions that captured each teacher's perception of their efficacy.

Case study was the research strategy employed to gather data. This strategy allowed the researcher to design the study and data collection around the research questions (Meyer, 2001). According to Yin (2017) the case study allows us to examine real life events and examine the boundaries between the events and the context in which they occur. A multiple case strategy was employed to reduce bias, enhance generalizability and add confidence to the findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Delimitations

This study is concerned with the factors that support a successful implementation of the response to intervention model. It is not concerned with the specific academic or behavioral intervention applied to individual students. Participants in the study will be employed by the same school district in north Texas. All campus level participants will work on public elementary school campuses that serve students from PK to fifth grade.

Limitations

Three limitations arose from this study. The teacher leaders selected for interviews were all experienced educators. At a campus where teacher turnover is high, the years of experience a teacher had would be expected to be lower. Therefore, there may be a range of experience represented in teachers holding leadership positions. Teachers chosen for the study had five or more years of experience and at least four years of experience in their current grade level and at their current campus. The sampling of teachers was relatively small with only one campus support professional per campus and one teacher per grade level. Interviews with all teachers providing intervention or support to the RtI model would have yielded a wider range of perceived self-efficacy. Teachers were asked to rate themselves during the interview. Social pressure, reflexivity or social bias may have motivated the participant to answer more positively while face to face with the researcher (Yin, 2017). The final limitation was data collection for the third question. The data were summarized by the district then given to the researcher. Grade level data from each campus were needed to fully answer research question three.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS RELATED TO THE LITERATURE

The summary of findings is organized by the research questions. The emergent themes introduced in Chapter 4 are discussed relative to current literature. From research question one, the researcher identified four structures present on each campus to support the implementation of RtI: Daily Dedicated Intervention Time, Elementary Intervention meetings, district-wide personnel to support the campus implementation of the RtI model, and clear guidance regarding data collection and use. Research question two surfaced the themes of teachers' data driven decisions and doubts, making the district RtI process work and implementation supports for teachers. Research question three yielded limited findings related to the link between teacher perceived self-efficacy and their effectiveness implementing the RtI model. Each theme is discussed in terms of its effect on the perceived self-efficacy of the participants.

Research Question One: What campus-level systems have been installed to support the implementation of RtI?

Daily intervention time, intervention meetings and district guidance related to data use were three structures that were installed to support the implementation of RtI. These campus-based structures were supported by district personnel. District level leaders assist campuses in configuring time by developing routines (Coburn & Turner, 2012; Spillane, Parise, & Sherer, 2011). The districtwide implementation of the daily 50-minute intervention time is evidence of this in Texas ISD. In keeping with the literature, district level resources were used to develop guidance documents and structures for campus level implementation (Honig, 2008; Honig & Venkateswaran, 2012).

Findings related to district guidance related to data use were based on information from the *RtI Handbook.* The detailed the system data system created by the district to administer the universal screener and progress monitoring assessments at prescribed intervals. Research conducted by Coburn and Turner (2012) suggests this work must be done at the district level where the authority lies to adopt assessments and data systems. The district also has the authority to influence norms of interaction among teachers (Coburn & Turner, 2012; Honig & Venkateswaran, 2012; Spillane & Miele, 2007).

Research Question Two: How do teachers perceive their efficacy concerning their knowledge and application of RtI?

Data driven decisions and lowered self-efficacy, following the RtI process, and supports for teachers emerged as themes in response to research question two. Three possible barriers also emerged.

Data driven decisions and lowered self-efficacy

Teachers use of data from progress monitoring and universal screeners drives the response to intervention process. Consistent with the literature, the district established routine meetings to ensure teachers have and opportunity to review student performance data. Teachers embraced the district's purpose for the meetings. They also saw the data meetings as a support for their instruction and a place where they could share instructional practices, doubts and frustrations. Self-efficacy increases when people disconfirm misbeliefs about what they do not understand or gain new skills to manage challenging activities (Bandura, 2006). The data meetings serve both purposes. They allow teachers to learn and grow within a safe environment.

While teachers' beliefs about their own capabilities may increase as they are challenged, their belief in the validity of assessment data reflected the research of Coburn and Talbert (2006) which found that teachers saw evidence that was authentic and based on teacher judgment as valid. Two teachers from each campus expressed doubt in the data they used for decision making and believed in the validity of their own judgements rather than the data. Consistent with Ruppar, Gaffney and Dymond's 2015 qualitative study of decision making among special education teachers, the doubtful study participants deferred decision making to the grade level team led by the Interventionist.

The lack of multiple data sources may have contributed to the doubt expressed by teachers. The district set the expectations for data use (Stiggins, 2009; Honig, 2008). District expectations are reinforced by the printed and human resources. The RtI Manual and forms state the performance standards, detail the use of data and provide teachers with a means for sharing data with parents and colleagues at the campus and district level. The district clearly values data and its ability to drive the RtI model. Teachers can evaluate multiple data points from two to three months of progress monitoring. If they do not develop their own formative assessments, they rely on the MAP Learning Continuum. Triangulating data from multiple sources would allow teachers to confirm or disconfirm their beliefs (Wayman & Stringfield, 2006). Additionally, the data meetings occurred monthly. The District guidelines neither encourage nor discourage teachers to analyze data more frequently at Tier 2. Sheperd's 2009 comments on the validity of formative assessments suggest that a meeting structure tied to student performance rather than the

mandates of the process could allow teachers to address their concerns earlier in the process.

Following the RtI process

Teachers adjusted their schedules, instructional practices and collaboration styles to ensure fidelity to the RtI process. Although they spoke of the additional work in a negative light, the teachers were very positive in their descriptions of the RtI model and its impact on student outcomes. Moreover, they believed in their capabilities to positively impact student achievement through the RtI model. Knowledge of the learner and previous experience are critical determinants of self-efficacy (Wang, Tan, Li, Tan & Lim, 2017; Wright & Meyer, 2017). All the teachers in this study had at least four years of experience implementing the RtI model in the district which could account for their belief in their ability to have a positive impact on the academic success of a struggling student. Self-efficacy beliefs increase as teachers have more mastery experiences (Bandura 1982, 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

Implementation supports for teachers

The District provided various forms professional development, written guidance and meeting structures to assist teachers in implementation. Nunn and Jantz (2009) explicitly related professional development emphasizing the components of the RtI model to teachers' beliefs about their capabilities and positive student outcomes. Several teachers responded that they did not receive any professional development in the implementation of the District's RtI model. With prompting they mentioned professional

development in assessment. Few teachers discussed professional development on student interventions or instructional practices. Teachers in the study did not readily associate the district supports they received with the concept of professional development. Most teachers saw the iTeam members as trusted colleagues who were supporting them throughout the RtI process which they are. iTeam members also model lessons and provide coaching to classroom teachers. Coaching and modeling and the resultant feedback cycles are essential to implementing the RtI model (Brock & Carter, 2017; Glover, 2017) and increasing self-efficacy (Castillo, et al, 2016; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Seen through the lens of social constructivism, each of the supports affords the teacher an opportunity to enter a social setting and co-construct meaning with other professionals. As individuals interact with others, they acquire new knowledge and strategies (Palinscar, 1998).

The monthly data meeting with the interventionist is the most important support structure in the district's RtI model. Every teacher mentioned the meeting in positive terms. Without this meeting, each teacher would be solely responsible for the entire RtI process and student outcomes. Research supports the data meeting and the purposeful interactions that take place within it. Teachers can address the selection of the appropriate feedback to the data yielded by formative assessments with the assistance of their peers (Coburn, 2004; Heritage, Kim, Vendlinski, & Herman, 2009; Kratochwill, Volpiansky, Clements, & Ball, 2007; Marsh, 2012; Shepard, 2009; Young & Kim, 2010).

Research Question Three: How do teacher perceptions of efficacy affect student outcomes within the RtI model?

Mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal are all theorized sources of self-efficacy (Bandura, 2006). Each source was present in the district and may have been responsible for the high efficacy beliefs exhibited by the teachers who participated in the study. Based on the findings for research question three, it is unclear how teacher perceptions affected student outcomes within the RtI model. Following guidance from Shapiro and Clemens' Data Worksheet for Organizing Evaluation of Response to Intervention, the district collected data from each site about the percentage of students moving to a more or less intense tier of intervention and the number of students referred to special education. The findings based on this data revealed distinct student outcomes for students at each campus.

The percentage of students who moved to a more or less intense tier of intervention during the school year

Overall, both campuses saw a 4-5% reduction in the number of students in the number of students receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention. The reduction would indicate that teachers were successful in providing students with appropriate interventions. The importance of the findings relative to movement within the RtI model is explained by Shapiro and Clemens:

> Movement between the tiers is a reflection of the impact of an RTI model. When data indicate that greater movement occurred from more intensive to less intensive tiers, it suggests the RTI model is succeeding in helping students make gains that allow them to be placed at less intensive tiers. On the other hand, when

> data indicate that the majority of students are moving toward more intensive intervention tiers, it would suggest that the model should be reexamined with regard to the instructional effectiveness of the Tier 1 (core instruction) and Tier 2 intervention (2009, p. 9).

The quality of intervention delivered and teacher decision making drive student outcomes within the RtI model. A higher sense of teacher self-efficacy positively influences both instruction and decision making (Bandura, 1982; Guskey, 1988; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990).

The number of students who were referred to Special Education compared to the students who qualified

The number of students referred from Tier 3 for special education at Campus A was more than double the number of students at Campus B. The percentage of students who qualified for services through Special Education was only 61% at Campus A compared to 100% at Campus B. The difference in number of students referred reflects a greater number of students who teachers believed were not responsive to interventions at Campus A. The lower qualification rate reflects a less efficient implementation of the RtI model (Shapiro & Clemens, 2009). Grade level data about the movement between tiers and special education referrals would be needed to fully answer research question three. The grade level data could be compared to teacher's self-ratings of efficacy to determine how student outcomes were affected.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The study identified several factors that were part of the District's RtI process that were possible barriers to the development of self-efficacy. Addressing these factors could remove barriers for teachers who are unsure of their ability to implement elements of the RtI model. Teachers need an expansive view of professional development. This will ensure that they are intentional in their approach to the development activity. Coaching and modeling of interventions advance the RtI process, but they are also meant to develop the teacher's skills. Professional development on specific interventions to support struggling students is needed so that teachers have an in depth understanding of the needs of struggling learners. Specific professional development would address any lack of familiarity with the intervention materials and the RtI process. Group size was a barrier because the teacher was overwhelmed with the varied needs of each student within the group. Campus teams should be mindful of group size and composition ensuring that the needs of student in the group are as similar as possible.

Although communication did not emerge as a theme within the study, it was evident in the tight coupling between district guidance and campus implementation. The forms, manuals, and supports from the iTeam all communicate the District's singular message regarding the implementation of RtI. The teachers at Campus A and B were certain in their ability to perform each component of the model because the performance guidelines were clearly communicated, and support was high. Within the district, communication cannot be left to chance. A strong centralized message seems to be a requisite to ensure teachers have a strong sense of efficacy. Teachers understand what

they must do, they know who will offer them support in doing it and they are accountable to their students and the group of teachers who offer them support. The teachers owned the RtI model. The participants in the study viewed themselves as fully responsible for the RtI process at their grade level. The language they used when speaking about the process was inclusive of themselves. The district ensured structures were in place to implement the model, but teachers understood that they were responsible for implementation.

These teachers experiences high perceived their self-efficacy in their implementation of their District's Response to Intervention model. Providing an entire team at each campus to support teachers and students is costly. During their interviews several teachers shared that one of their progress monitoring tools was removed due to cost. Changing the tools may not affect student outcomes but removing the supports for the process may have a greater effect on students and teachers. Teachers relied on the iTeam for professional development, data preparation, coaching, intervention lesson support, and direct instruction of students at Tier 3. Continuing implementation of the RtI model without the iTeam may have a negative effect on perceived self-efficacy and the District's overall implementation of RtI.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The teachers at both campuses depended on each other to make decisions about student progress, grouping, and interventions. A qualitative study of collective efficacy in the implementation of the RtI model is needed to explore how collective efficacy affects

the academic outcomes of students receiving intervention. Participants addressed the structures and the time it took to prepare for a lesson, but they did not address any specific interventions. Teachers instead discussed data, the response to their interventions. A study of the interventions used in school districts absent the support of university outside consultants, or vendors is needed to determine how or if the interventions widely used in districts are effective or if they are feasible for large scale use. Research question three of this study was not answered in full. A mixed methods study of teacher self-efficacy and its relation to implementation effectiveness is needed. Future researchers will need access to student level RtI data in order to assess teacher effectiveness in applying the RtI model to affect student outcomes.

REFLECTION

Perceived self-efficacy is not the same as being self-confident. Perceived self-efficacy reflects one's thinking about their ability to do something. The participants in this study believed they could implement each component of the Texas ISD RtI model. Both campuses were high trust environments where teachers were eager to discuss the complexities of the District's RtI model. Teachers held each other in high regard. While the district provided many of the supports, campus leadership ensured they could flourish within their environment. Their impact on the current study is worthy of mention.

Researching teachers' perceived self-efficacy brings sharply into focus the importance of how we as a society support our teachers. As one teacher shared in her interview, they do not have all of the answers. The high trust environment on both

campuses allowed teachers to share their insights, strengths and weaknesses with an outside researcher. The resources dedicated to the RtI model throughout the district were fundamental to its success. All teachers deserve the level of support and high trust environments enjoyed by these participants. Ensuring a learning environment for students as well as adults is the work of campus and district leadership.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: SCHOOL RTI ALL-STAFF PERCEPTION SURVEY

School RtI All-Staff Perception Survey

The Wisconsin RtI Center (CFDA #84.027) acknowledges the support of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction in the development of this website and for the continued support of this federally-funded grant program.

Wisconsin RtI Center, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. (2016). *School RtI all-staff perception survey.* Retrieved from https://www.wisconsinrticenter.org/assets/files/AllStaff/AllStaff%20Survey042016.pdf

Wisconsin RtI Center
Wisconsin PBIS Network
IDEA CFDA 84.027

School RtI All-Staff Perception Survey

Purpose of the Survey:

The RtI All-Staff Perception Survey is used by school staff for initial and annual assessment of perceptions of implementation of reading and mathematics multi-level support systems in their school. The survey examines the status and need for improvement of four domains: (a) high quality instruction; (b) balanced assessments; (c) collaboration; and (d) leadership and organizational structures. Each question in the survey relates to one of the four domains.

The survey results are summarized and used for a variety of purposes including:

- An **integral part of decision making and annual action planning** in each content area.
- A means for **identifying staff awareness of specific RtI practices** in a school that may or may not have been implemented;
- A way to **compare leadership team perceptions (SIR results)** with overall staff perceptions of RtI implementation;
- A way to **assess the progress of staff awareness and/or perception** on an annual basis;
- A **supplement to the SIR**, but is not a substitute for the SIR.

Instructions for completion by school staff

1. Complete the survey independently and in one sitting.
2. Schedule 10-20 minutes to complete the entire survey.
3. Base ratings on individual experiences in the school and specified content area (i.e. reading or mathematics).
4. Complete the left side of the screen for current status first (i.e. in place; partially in place, not in place);
5. Next, for the same feature, move to the right side of the screen for the priority level for improvement and indicate the degree to which improvements are needed (i.e. high, medium, low).
6. Responses to this survey will be anonymous.

School Name:
SIR Completion Date: **SIR All-Staff Perceptions Completion Date Range:**

a. Do we have HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION on multiple levels?

Current Status			*Feature*	*Priority*		
In Place	*Partial in Place*	*Not in Place*	*Delivery of universal curriculum and instruction is:*	*High*	*Medium*	*Low*
			1. Determined by grade-level/course benchmarks			
			2. Based on the WI Common Core Standards or other standards			
			3. Differentiated to match each student's need			
			4. Reviewed for quality and effectiveness			
			5. Responsive to the cultural beliefs, practices and experiences of all students			
			6. Furthered through engagement with parents/guardians			

Current Status			*Feature*	*Priority*		
In Place	*Partial in Place*	*Not in Place*	*Delivery of interventions for students is:*	*High*	*Medium*	*Low*
			7. Provided in addition to the universal curriculum for students below a defined benchmark			
			8. Provided in addition to the universal curriculum for students exceeding a defined benchmark			
			9. Aligned to the universal curriculum and standards			
			10. Reviewed for quality and effectiveness			
			11. Responsive to the cultural beliefs, practices and experiences of all students			
			12. Furthered through engagement with parents/guardians			

School Name:
SIR Completion Date: **SIR All-Staff Perceptions Completion Date Range:**

b. Do we use BALANCED ASSESSMENTS to continuously review student progress?

Current Status			*Feature*	*Priority*		
In Place	*Partial in Place*	*Not in Place*	***A formal universal screening process (i.e. assessment at the universal level) is:***	*High*	*Medium*	*Low*
			13. Dependent on using multiple measures			
			14. Administered to **all** students **multiple times** each year			
			15. Used to determine the effectiveness of universal supports			
			16. Used to determine additional student supports and adjust accordingly			
			17. Used to analyze results by student demographic groups *(e.g. by gender, race/ethnicity, disability status, etc.)*			
			18. Supported through engagement with parents/guardians			

Current Status			*Feature*	*Priority*		
In Place	*Partial in Place*	*Not in Place*	***A formal progress monitoring process at the selected and intensive levels is:***	*High*	*Medium*	*Low*
			19. Provided for all students below benchmark receiving interventions			
			20. Provided for all students above benchmark receiving additional challenges			
			21. Documented for individual and small group student problem solving and decision making			

School Name:
SIR Completion Date: **SIR All-Staff Perceptions Completion Date Range:**

			22. Used to analyze results by student demographic groups *(e.g. by gender, race/ethnicity, disability status, etc.)*			
			23. Supported through engagement with parents/guardians			

c. Do we **COLLABORATE** within our multi-level system of support?

Current Status			***Feature***	***Priority***		
In Place	***Partial in Place***	***Not in Place***	***To strengthen the effect of our <u>Universal</u> curriculum/instruction, we...***	***High***	***Medium***	***Low***
			24. Collaborate frequently in grade level/content area teams			
			25. Follow a consistent process to guide grade level/content area team discussions and decisions			
			26. Collaborate periodically *across* grade levels/content			

Current Status			***Feature***	***Priority***		
In Place	***Partial in Place***	***Not in Place***	***To strengthen the effect of our <u>selected and intensive</u> interventions/challenges, we...***	***High***	***Medium***	***Low***
			27. Involve multiple staff roles in grade level/content area teams when determining student support			
			28. Work collectively to provide interventions/challenges			
			29. Use a process to access timely building-level problem-solving team support			
			30.Follow a data-based process to guide building-level problem-solving team decisions			

School Name:
SIR Completion Date: **SIR All-Staff Perceptions Completion Date Range:**

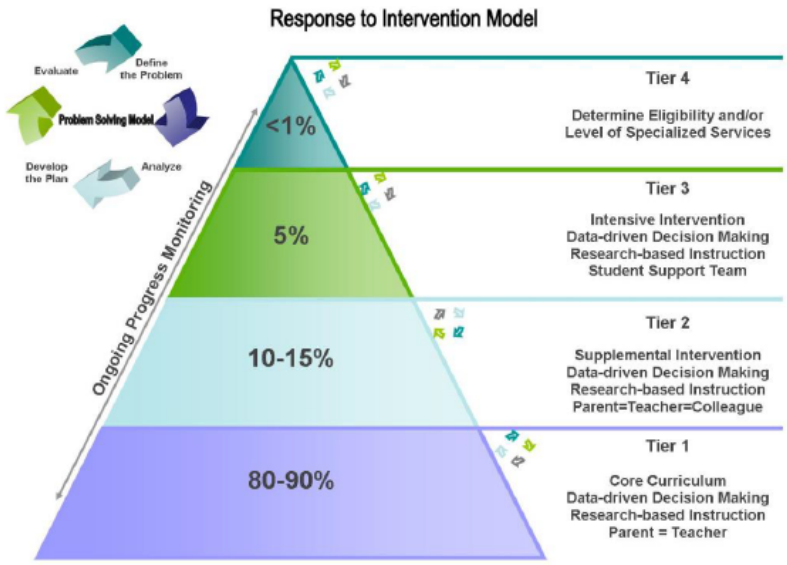
d. Do we have school-wide LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES to support full RtI implementation?

Current Status			*Feature*	*Priority*		
In Place	*Partial in Place*	*Not in Place*	*The RtI implementation for our school is:*	*High*	*Medium*	*Low*
			31. Defined by a common vision or purpose for our building			
			32. Actively supported by our principal			
			33. Actively supported by all school staff			
			34. Supported by school-wide schedules			
			35. Supported by a leadership team			
			36. Supported by clearly defined staff roles			
			37. Responsive to the cultural beliefs, practices and experiences of all students			
			38. Supported through engagement with parents/guardians			

APPENDIX B: RTI MODEL EXCERPT FROM TEXAS ISD RTI MANUAL

Multi-tiered model

To ensure that appropriate instruction directly addresses students' academic and behavioral difficulties in the general education setting, a multi-tiered service delivery model is used. Included are layers of increasingly intense intervention responding to student-specific needs.



To explain the components of the model illustrated above in more detail:

Tier 1:

Teachers use high-quality core class instruction aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in which about 80% or more of the students are successful. Tier 1 is the foundation of the RtI model.

Tier 2:

Students are identified for individual or small group intervention in addition to core class instruction. This level includes scientific research-based programs, strategies, and procedures designed and employed to supplement, enhance, and support Tier 1 activity. The appropriate intervention strategies are matched to specific student needs. Tier 2 addresses the needs of approximately 10-15% of the students.

Tier 3:

Students who have not responded adequately to Tiers 1 and 2 receive specific, custom-designed individual or small group instruction in addition to core instruction at Tier 1 and interventions at Tier 2. This level of intervention is aimed at those students who have identified difficulties academically or behaviorally. Tier 3 addresses the needs of approximately 5% of students.

Tier 4:

In Texas ISD, Tier 4 is reserved for students who require specialized services.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your understanding of the RtI Process?
2. What is your attitude towards RtI?
3. How has the implementation of RtI affected your work?
4. How do you use the universal screening process to match student needs?
5. Based on the progress monitoring data, how do you determine of a student is making adequate progress?
6. How would you rate your degree of confidence to:

   Decide when a student has had sufficient intervention and needs to move from Tier 2 to Tier 3

   Respond to student needs during an intervention session

   Adjust instruction/intervention based on results of the universal screener

   Select an appropriate evidence-based practice to address the needs of a group of struggling students

   Deliver an intervention session based on the needs of struggling learners

   Apply the professional development I have received in the implementation of RtI

   Work with a team to address the needs of struggling students.

   Have a positive impact on the success of a student who struggles academically

   Rate your degree of confidence using the scale below:

   0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

   Cannot do Moderately can do Highly certain can do

7. Would you like to elaborate on any of ratings?
8. Please elaborate on a particular rating.

APPENDIX D: TABLE OF FORMS USED IN TEXAS ISD

Table of forms used in Texas ISD to support the RtI Model

Title	Purpose	When	User
Tier 2			
Tier 2 Documentation form	Elementary Monthly progress monitoring form.	Once a month	Classroom teacher, intervention teacher
PSM Elementary Worksheet PSM Secondary Worksheet	Documents that are to be used at any level to record the problem-solving process for a struggling student. The intervention plan is written and documented using this form.	During the meeting Before and after the intervention	Teacher or Consultant
Data Collection Checklist	Document that can be used to assist in the planning of RTI meetings. The collected data should be brought to the RTI meeting.	Before and during the RTI meeting.	Teacher and Consultant
Teacher Survey of Student Performance and Behavior	Survey of student's behavior for the last 30 days	**Optional**: Can be submitted prior to the meeting if there is a **behavior concern**	Teacher
Parent Survey of Student Behavior	Survey of student's behavior for the last 30 days	**Optional**: Can be submitted prior to the meeting if there is a **behavior concern**	Teacher
Tier 3			
SST Referral Form	Initial document used to refer a student to the SST. Must be submitted to the chairperson	To initiate the SST Tier 3 meeting	Referring Person
SST Referral Checklist	Record dates of all of the steps taken in the SST Process including referrals for other services	Once referral to SST has been accepted	Chairperson
SST Parental Notification Letter	Notifies parent of SST meeting	Prior to meeting	Chairperson
SST Request for Parental Information	Allows parent to give input that may be useful to the SST	Prior to meeting	Parent
SST Pre-School Parent Information Form	Allows parent to give input that may be useful to the SST	Prior to meeting	Parent
SST Pre-Referral Information Form	Initial document used to refer a 3-5 year old student.	Prior to meeting	Referring Person

Title	Purpose	When	User
SST Environmental, Cultural, and Economic Checklist	Used to see how significantly these factors may contribute to the student's difficulties	Prior to meeting	Teacher, team member
SST Action Plan	To record all interventions to be implemented as well as their duration and outcome. All subsequent meeting dates should be recorded on the document as well.	During the meeting	Team
SST Recommendations	Informs the parent of all recommendations of the SST. Can be mailed or hand delivered to the parent if they do not attend.	During the meeting	Team (signed by all present)

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